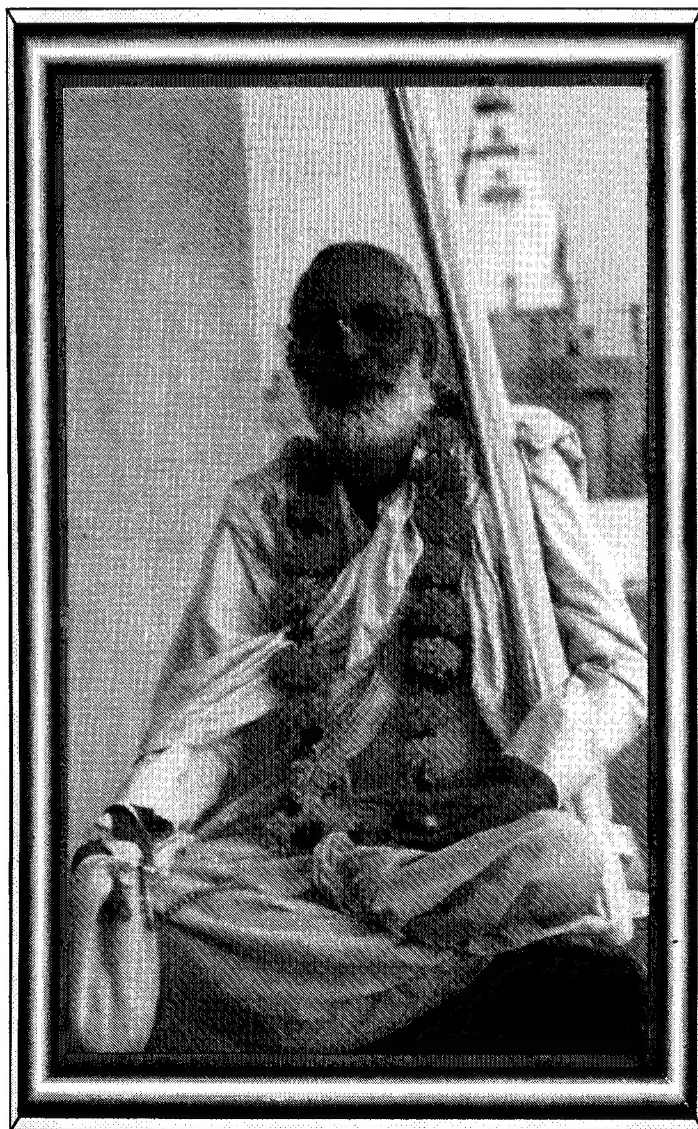
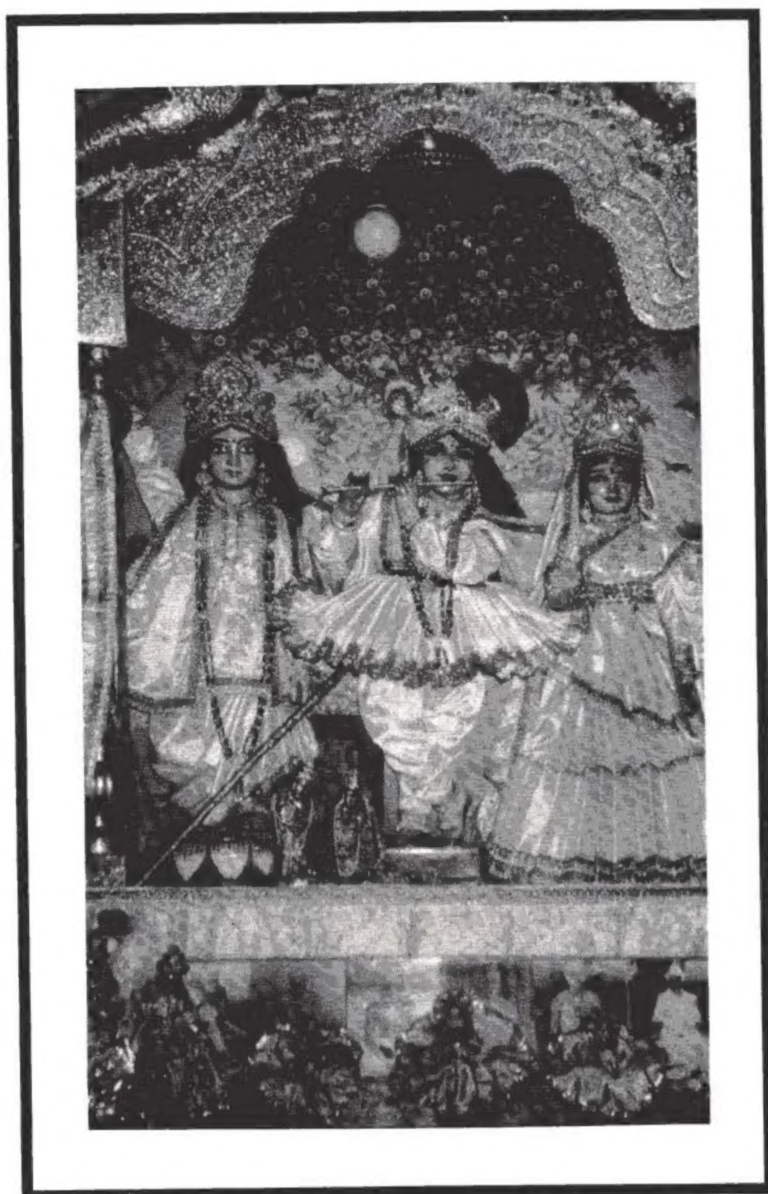
The True Conception of Guru-Tattva

The Relation between Guru and Disciple



Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta
Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja



Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Radha Vinode Biharijiu

Sri Sri Guru-Gaurangau Jayatah

The True Conception of Guru-Tattva

The Relation Between Guru and Disciple

A compilation of essays and discourses establishing the Gaudiya Vaisnava Siddhanta.

by

Sri Rupanuga Acarya Varya

Om Visnupada Sri Srimad

Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaja

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From a Living Sadhu

Quotations from
Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda
on the
Paramount Necessity of Having a Living Guru

"We have to hear about the Supreme Lord from His own agent. When we hear those things then all material experience and the inclination to make false arguments have to be locked up. When we hear about the Supreme Lord from a **living *sādhu*** who can deliver these talks in a bold, lively, inspiring way, then all weakness will disappear from our hearts, we will feel a kind of courage which was never there before, and the soul's natural tendency to surrender to the Lord will fully manifest itself. In that surrendered heart the eternally manifested truth of the transcendental world will spontaneously reveal itself."

Question: "Can one worship Kṛṣṇa without being under the guidance of Gurudeva?"

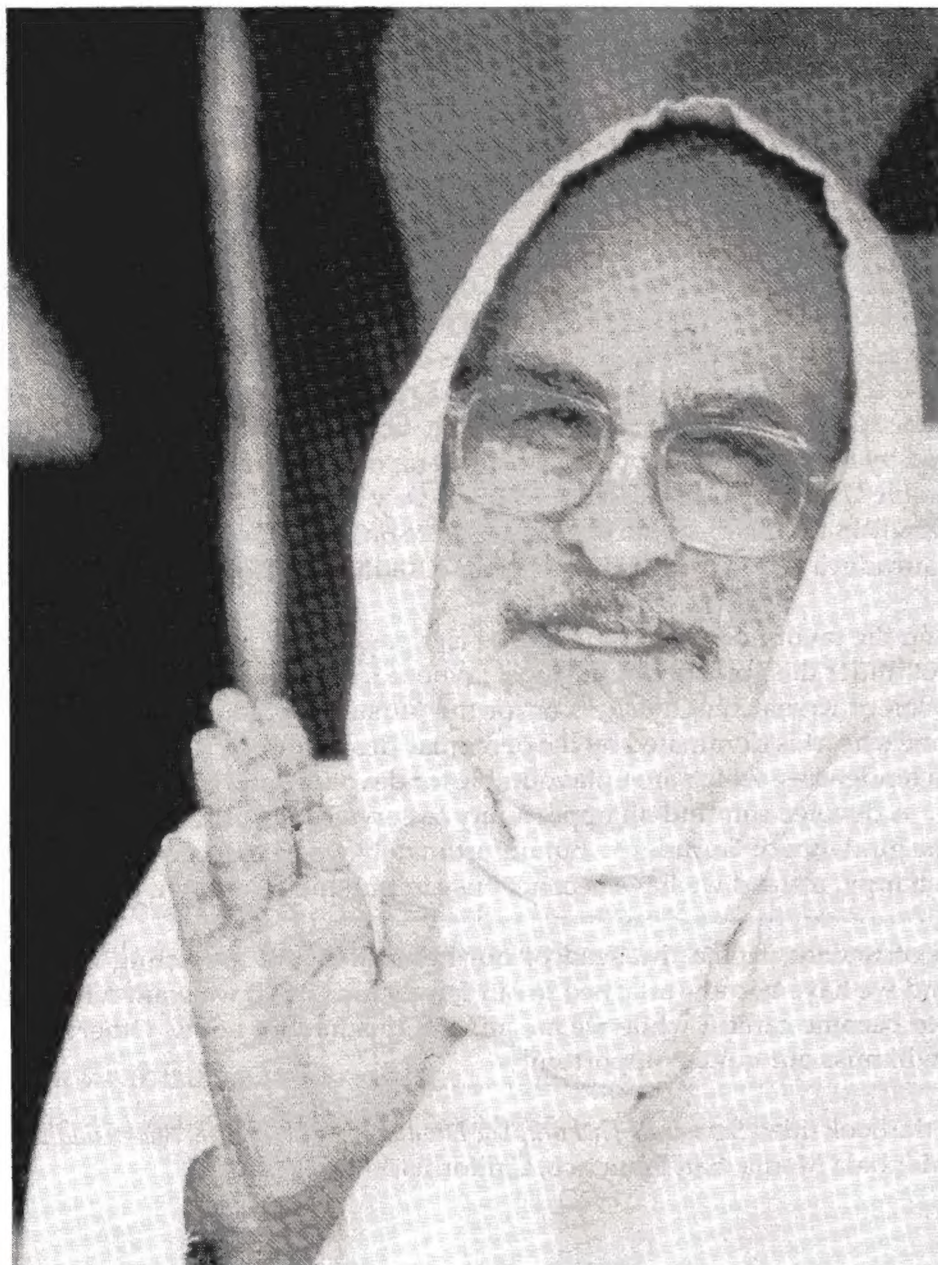
Answer: "Never. Our only aim in life is to cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This can only be done under the guidance or instruction of a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Vārṣabhānavī-devī (Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī) is most favoured by Kṛṣṇa. Worshipping Her is most favourable for worshipping Kṛṣṇa. No one is more favourable than Śrī Rādhā. Those who are very dear to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī are all our spiritual masters. We, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, are more on the side of Rādhārāṇī than on the side of Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Gurudeva is non different from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

"Only by getting the favour of the most favoured is it possible to cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When one is not under the guidance of the most favoured, one will not find anything favourable for the cultivation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness or for the pursuit of Kṛṣṇa's happiness. Instead one will find that one's heart is dominated by the demoniac desire for one's own happiness. One has to give up such tendencies, which are unfavourable for devotion, and one has to give up all pride and arrogance. A devotee can find all opportunity to serve Kṛṣṇa only when he wants to serve Kṛṣṇa under the guidance of Gurudeva. But unfortunately we have forgotten to make any effort to make Kṛṣṇa happy; instead we have become busy in pursuit of our own happiness.

"Alas! Instead of making Kṛṣṇa the head of our household, we are acting in the role of the householder and we have become attached to our family life. But if we want what is good for us then we have to become careful while we are alive in this human body. Otherwise we will be deceived; we will miss our golden opportunity."

Extracted from the book titled *Saraswati Ṭhākura, The Life and Precepts of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati* published by Maṇḍala Media, San Francisco, California.

Rtvik and Śrī Guru-Tattva



This line of *guru-paramparā* is existing up to today without any break and it will continue to exist like this in the future also. To say, "There is no *sad-guru* living in the world at present and neither will there be any in the future," is an atheistic opinion.

Rtvik and Śrī Guru-tattva

Introduction

After the physical departure of His Divine Grace Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda, an *uttama-bhāgavata ācārya,* there have been many questions about his disciples acting as *gurus,* some of whom have fallen down. Thus there is overall concern about *gurus* amongst his followers and how to properly continue the line.

The *'guru-tattva'* and *'ṛtvik'* discussions now challenge the assembled devotees to understand Śrīla Prabhupāda's desires regarding Vaiṣṇava initiation. There are several sincere, yet conflicting viewpoints interpreting Śrīla Prabhupāda's intentions. The *'ṛtvik* proposal' suggests that Śrīla Prabhupāda desired that a system be set up for devotees (as *ṛtviks*) to initiate disciples on his behalf even after his departure, and those new initiates would continue to be his disciples alone.

At Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Mathurā, curious devotees asked Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja questions on this topic. Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja is always happy to clarify *siddhānta* and to glorify Śrīla Prabhupāda. To help us grasp Śrīla Prabhupāda's intentions for the continuation of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja presents here pertinent references from the Vedic scriptures (*Gītā, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Upaniṣads, Rāmāyaṇa*), clearly conveying the true meaning of *'ṛtvik'*, and how it is viewed in relation to the eternal system of *guru-paramparā.*

For the many devotees who are trying to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *saṅkīrtana* movement, we hope the following explanations will offer critically important insight into these often misunderstood topics.

The meaning of the word *'ṛtvik'*

Q: According to scripture, what is the meaning of *ṛtvik*?

A: *Teṣam ṛg yatrārthavaśena pādo-vyavasthā*—"The Vedic *mantras* in which the quarters are arranged to carry complete meaning and are composed according to the science of meter are called *ṛcā* or *ṛg*." [*Paingala-sūtra* 2.9.32]. The established conclusion of all the Vedas, discovered deep within the Vedas, is pure devotion unto Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is all-mighty (*sarva-śaktimān*) and an ocean of all nectarean mellows (*akhila-rasāmṛta-sindhu*). However, externally, the Vedas appear to be related to the performance of *yajña* for fulfilling fruitive desire (*karma-kāṇḍa*), and worship of impersonal Brahmān by cultivation of knowledge (*jñāna-kāṇḍa*). The Ṛg-Veda and Atharva-Veda have no direct relationship with the performance of *yajña* (sacrifice), but the Sāma-Veda and Yajur-Veda are directly related with sacrifices and their rituals.

'Ṛtau yajtītī ṛtvikī.' One who conducts sacrifices according to Vedic *mantras* is called a *ṛtvik*. There is an arrangement of sixteen types of *ṛtviks* to perform Vedic sacrifices. These are *Brahmā, udgātā, hotā, adhvaryu, Brahmāccsi, prastotā, maitāvarun, pratisthātā, potā, pratihartā, accāvāk, neṣṭhā, āgnidhra, suBrahmānya, grāvastotā,* and *unyaitā*. The *yajmān* employs priests to perform sacrifice for him and pays them. He selects these sixteen types of *ṛtviks* for the sacrifices. All these *ṛtviks* are virtuous, of high character, learned in the Vedas and expert in execution and supervision of sacrifices. Among all these sixteen *ṛtviks, hotā, udgātā, adhvaryu* and *Brahmā* are prominent.

Four types of prominent *ṛtviks*

(1) One who invokes the particular deities (*devatās*) to be present in the sacrifice by reciting the *mantras* of Ṛg-Veda, and thus performs the sacrifice, is called *hotā*.

(2) One who sings aloud the hymns of Sāma-Veda in adoration of invoked deities is called *udgātā*.

(3) The *adhvaryu* murmurs the prosaic section of the Yajur-Veda, and performs his specific duties. His participation in *yajña* is quite prominent.

(4) Protecting the *yajña* from external obstacles, rectifying the possible mistakes in recitation, and removal of various types of discrepancies arising in the detailed performances related to *yajña*, is the function of *Brahmā*. He is the chief priest of *yajña*. He supervises the over-all functioning of *yajña* and rectifies the faults. So this *Brahmā* is considered superior to all other *ṛtviks*. Hence, it is imperative for the *Brahmā*, who undertakes the main responsibility to supervise the whole sacrifice, to have complete knowledge of the three Vedas (Ṛg, Sāma, Yajur).

Ṛtviks mentioned in Vedic history

In Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, similar descriptions about *ṛtvik* are found:

nā sadanga vidatrāsīnnāvṛato nābahuśrutah
sadasyāstasya vai rajñyo nāvāda kuśala dvijah
[*Bāla-kāṇḍa* 14.29]

"In the *putresti-yajña* (sacrifice performed with the desire to have a son) conducted for Mahārāja Daśaratha all the conductors, or *ṛtviks*, were well-versed in all the limbs of the Vedas. They were all strict celibates, and had heard the Vedas repeatedly and systematically from expert knowers of Vedas. All of them were expert in philosophical discussion and assertions."

We find another example of sixteen *ṛtviks* described in the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the description of *aśvamedha-yajña*:

hayasya yāni cāṅgāni tāni sarvāṇi brāhmaṇāh
agnau prāsyanti vidhivata samastah sadaśritvirjñh
[*Bāla-kaṇḍa* 14.38]

"All the sixteen types of *ṛtviks* started to offer oblative articles systematically into the fire, which were required as integral limbs of the *aśvamedha-yajña*."

Ṛtviks employed to help fulfill fruitive desires

Beginning from the Vedic period up to Dvāpara-yuga, it is seen that many great emperors have obtained their desired fruits by flawless performance of sacrifices. Because these kings were not very expert in the Vedas and in performing sacrifices, they themselves became *yajmāns*, and they appointed as *ṛtviks*, non-greedy and virtuous *brāhmaṇas*, who were well-versed in the Vedas and in performance of *yajña*. Sometimes even *brāhmaṇas* who were knowers of the Vedas used to perform the Vedic sacrifices with the help of *ṛtviks* in order to fulfill their fruitive desires. Generally all of these sacrifices were performed for fulfilling material desires, the chief of which was the attainment of heavenly planets.

Function of *ṛtvik* is not related to transcendental *bhakti*

Q: What is the relationship of *ṛtvik* with *guru-tattva* as described in scriptures?

A: After deliberation upon the *Mahābhārata* (the fifth Veda), Vālmikī's *Rāmāyaṇa*, and the *Purāṇas*, it becomes very obvious that *ṛtviks* have nothing to do with *paramārtha*, the subjects of the supreme transcendental goal, namely *ātmā-tattva* (the science of the self), *bhāgavata-tattva* (the science of Bhagavān), *bhakti-tattva* and so on. The *ṛtvik* does not aim to attain *mukti* in the form of emancipation from mundane miseries, nor to attain eternal service to the lotus feet of Bhagavān after becoming free from the cycle of birth and death. After the completion of *yajñas*, the *yajmān* pays the appropriate remunerations (*dakṣiṇa*) to the *ṛtviks* and sends them away. The *yajmān* and the *ṛtvik* have no mutual eternal relationships.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Mahābhārata* also there are very few contexts which are related to *ṛtviks*. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* wherever the word "*ṛtvik*" has been mentioned, it is used only in connection with the performance of *yajñas*, and nowhere can it be found being used in relation to *paramārtha* or supreme transcendental goals. In the famous episode of Purañjana, there is a reference in which King Prācīnabarhi performed unlimited numbers of *yajñas* through his *ṛtviks*. As a result of these *yajña*s the eastern portion of the earth was completely covered by sacrificial grass mats (*kuśa*). In many of these *aśvamedha-yajñas* animals were also sacrificed. Still the king's mind was restless. Eventually by the instructions of Devarṣi Nārada he realized the futility of *yajñas* performed to fulfill material desires. After completely abandoning them, he entered into the path of *bhakti*. This topic is illustrated in the Fourth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

In the *Ādi-parva* section of *Mahābhārata*, regarding the topic of the *Khandavana-daha*, the burning of the Khandavana forest, there is a descriptive episode of King Svetaki. During his lifetime King Svetaki had so many *yajñas* performed that all of his *ṛtviks* became fed up with such *yajñas*. In spite of receiving high renumeration from the king for their services, as well as repeated requests that they continue performing *yajnas* for him, these *ṛtviks* were no longer willing to act as *ṛtviks*. Thus, becoming hopeless, Svetaki took shelter of Mahādeva Śaṅkara. He performed worship of Śrī Śaṅkara for a long time and thus pleased him. King Svetaki asked for the benediction that Śrī Śaṅkara would accept the post of *ṛtvik* and complete the performance of his *yajñas*. Being pleased with the king, Mahādeva Śaṅkara ordered his partial expansion, Maharṣi Durvāsā, to accept the post of *ṛtvik* and complete King Svetaki's *yajña*. Appointing Maharṣi Durvāsā as the chief (*Brahmā*) *ṛtvik*, King Svetaki successfully performed his *yajñas* through him, and at last attained Svargaloka according to his desires.

As described in Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, Mahārāja Daśaratha performed *aśvamedha-yajña* and *putresti-yajña* with the intention of having a son. He appointed Ringi Ṛṣi, who was well-versed in all the Vedas, as the chief *ṛtvik* (*Brahmā*). As a result of this performance he had four sons. Furthermore, Mahārāja Śrī Rāmacandra, following the *loka-maryādā* (moral principles and social customs for kings), performed many *yajñas* such as *aśvamedha* through Maharṣi Vasiṣṭha, Vamadeva and other *ṛṣis* and *munis* who knew the Vedas completely.

The Supreme Lord advises to endeavour only toward *paramārtha*

Thus it becomes obvious that all such *yajñas* are performed merely to fulfill mundane desires and to attain *svarga*, but they are never performed in pursuance of *paramārtha*, transcendental *bhakti*. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, while giving instructions to Arjuna in *Gītopaniṣad*, has Himself said:

trai-vidyā māṁ soma-pāḥ pūta-pāpā
yajñair iṣṭvā svar-gatiṁ prārthayante
te puṇyam āsādya surendra-lokam
aśnanti divyān divi deva-bhogān
[*Gītā* 9.20]

"Those who study the Vedas and drink the *soma* juice, seeking the heavenly planets, worship Me indirectly. They take birth on the planet of Indra, where they enjoy godly delights."

te taṁ bhuktvā svarga-lokaṁ viśālaṁ
kṣīṇe puṇye martya-lokaṁ viśanti
evaṁ trayī-dharmam anuprapannā
gatāgataṁ kāma-kāmā labhante
[*Gītā* 9.21)

"When they have thus enjoyed heavenly sense pleasure, they return to this mortal planet again. Thus, through the Vedic principles, they achieve only flickering happiness."

In other words, people who are attached to performing the fruitive activities mentioned in the three Vedas (Ṛg, Sāma and Yajur), worship Me by performing *yajñas*, and, accepting the remnants (*soma-rasa*) of *yajña*, they become free from sins and pray for the destination of heaven. As the result of their pious activities they attain Indra-loka, and there they enjoy the objects of divine pleasure available to the demigods. After enjoying the great sense pleasures available in heaven, they again fall back to the material world due to gradually exhausting all of their pious deeds. Thus, these people who perform *yajñas* to fulfill their material desires, as prescribed in the above three Vedas, repeatedly return to this material world. Śrī Kṛṣṇa also says:

trai-guṇya-viṣayā vedā
nistrai-guṇyo bhavārjuna
nirdvandvo nitya-sattva-stho
niryoga-kṣema ātmavān
[*Gītā* 2.45]

"The Vedas deal mainly with the subject of the three modes of material nature. O Arjuna, become transcendental to these three modes. Be free from all dualities and from all anxieties for gain and safety, and be established in the self."

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is saying: O Arjuna, giving up the three types of modes described in the Vedas, be fixed in *nirguṇa-tattva*, the absolute reality beyond the three modes. I alone am the supreme absolute truth established in the Vedas. There is no reality which is greater than Me. Unalloyed devotion, *śuddha-bhakti*, unto Me bestows the highest welfare upon *jīvas*.

The necessity of approaching a *sad-guru* for eternal and transcendental benefit

And further Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:

tad viddhi praṇipātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ
jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ
[*Gītā* 4.34]

"Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth."

For understanding Me, the supreme absolute reality, which is the topmost benefit of the *jīva*, one must approach a *guru* who has realized the truth. By offering him obeisances, inquiring

submissively from him and by rendering service to him, you should please him. Thus pleased, he will bestow upon you knowledge of *jīva-tattva* (the pure constitutional nature of the self), *para-tattva* (the nature of supreme absolute reality), and *bhakti-tattva*. After knowing all these, your human life will be successful.

It is clear that, other than imparting knowledge of *bhāgavata-tattva*, *bhakti-tattva*, and *ātmā-tattva*, the *tattva-darśi* (self-realized) *guru* has nothing to do with the fulfillment of one's temporary mundane desires.

It is said in the *Upaniṣads:*

tad-vijñānārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet
samit-pāṇiḥ śrotriyaṁ Brahmā-niṣṭham
[*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.12]

"To learn the transcendental subject matter, one must approach a spiritual master. In doing so, he should carry fuel to burn in sacrifice. The symptom of such a spiritual master is that he is expert in understanding the Vedic conclusion, and therefore he constantly engages in the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead."
For attaining *vijñāna* (*jñāna* with *prema-bhakti*) of the supreme absolute entity, carrying *samidha* (wood for the sacrifice), which in other words is considered to be representative of sublime faith, one must approach with complete surrender of body, mind, and words, a *guru* who knows the *tattva* of Kṛṣṇa and the essence of the Vedas.

Furthermore it is said in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.23):

yasya deve parā bhaktir
yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ
prakāśante mahātmanaḥ

"Only in the hearts of great saints, those who have transcendental devotion (*para-bhakti*) unto Śrī Bhagavān and also toward their Gurudeva, is the essence of all the Vedas revealed."

A similar statement is found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* also:

tasmād guruṁ prapadyeta
jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam
śābde pare ca niṣṇātaṁ
Brahmāṇy upaśamāśrayam
[*Bhāg*. 11.3.21]

"Any person who seriously desires to achieve real happiness must seek out a bona fide spiritual master and take shelter of him by initiation. The qualification of the spiritual master is that he must have realized the conclusion of the scriptures by deliberation, and must be able to convince others of these conclusions. Such great personalities who have taken shelter of the Supreme Godhead, leaving aside all material considerations, are to be understood as bona fide spiritual masters."

Bhakti, in the form of loving service to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is the only auspicious path for the *jīvas*. To know this, the inquisitive *sādhakas* (practitioners) must take the shelter of the lotus feet of a *sad-guru*. Only one who is very expert in the understanding of *śabda-Brahmā* (the conclusions of the Vedas), who has realized the supreme absolute truth and who is never overpowered by mundane sense objects or miseries is a *sad-guru*. In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* also this conclusion is established.

Brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja
[*Cc Madhya* 19.151]

"According to their *karma*, all living entities are wandering throughout the entire universe. Some of them are being elevated to the upper planetary systems, and some are going down into the lower planetary systems. Out of many millions of wandering living entities, one who is very fortunate gets an opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. By the mercy of both Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master, such a person receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service."

tāte kṛṣṇa bhaje, kare gurura sevana
māyā-jāla chuṭe, pāya kṛṣṇera caraṇa
[*Cc Madhya* 22.25]

"If the conditioned soul engages in the service of the Lord and simultaneously carries out the orders of his spiritual master and serves him, he can get out of the clutches of *māyā* and become eligible for shelter at Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet."

The role of Guru in the *sat-sampradāya*

From the above scriptural evidences it is very clear that the relationship between *guru* and *śiṣya* (disciple) is eternal and transcendental. Gurudeva is described as the *svarūpa* and *prakaśa* (manifestation) of Bhagavān. Therefore he must always be worshipped like Bhagavān. Only by his mercy can a *jīva* who is bound in the grips of *māyā* be freed, and after being situated in his pure constitutional position, become engaged in the service of Bhagavān. **Without the mercy of Śrī Gurudeva the supreme welfare of the *jīva* is impossible.**

On the other hand, the relationship between the *yajmān* and the *ṛtvik* is temporary and based on self-interest. It is for the fulfillment of mundane desires. Their relationship lasts for a short time only. Therefore, since time immemorial, the system of *guru-paramparā*, which is also known as *amnaya* or *sat-sampradāya*, has been prevalent in the scriptures. The four lines of bona fide succession of spiritual masters has originated from the associates of Śrī Bhagavān, that is Śrī Lakṣmī, Śrī Brahmā, Śrī Rudra and Śrī Sanat-kumāra. In the age of Kali Śrī Rāmānujācārya, Śrī Madhvācārya, Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī and Śrī Nimbaditya respectively are the four *ācāryas* famous as the followers of the above personalities. *Guru-paramparā* (the bona fide succession of spiritual masters) is always prevalent in the *amnaya* line of these four *ācāryas*. Even in the *advaita-sampradāya* (followers of Śaṅkarācārya) the tradition of *guru-paramparā* is well preserved.

In these four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*, five types of *gurus* are described which are *caitya-guru*, *patha-pradarśaka-guru*, *śravaṇa-guru*, *dīkṣā-guru* and *śikṣā-guru*. Bhagavān Himself, who gives inspiration for *bhajana* and other devotional activities from the core of the heart, is *caitya-guru*. A Vaiṣṇava who speaks fundamental truths about spiritual life and introduces the *sādhaka* to a *sad-guru* is called *patha-pradarśaka-guru*. One who, by the medium of his *hari-kathā*, attracts the *sādhaka* towards the service of Bhagavān and helps him in *sādhana-bhajana* is called *śravaṇa-guru*. One who initiates faithful *sādhakas* in *kṛṣṇa-mantra* and bestows *sambandha-jñāna* is called *dīkṣā-guru*. One who, by imparting specific instructions on *sādhana* and *bhajana*, helps the *sādhaka* to enter into the realm of *bhajana* is called *śikṣa-guru* or *bhajana-guru* in different places in the *śāstras*. Both *śikṣā* and *dīkṣā-gurus* have been equally described as the worshipable *bhāgavata-svarūpa* or representation of Bhagavān.

guru kṛṣṇa-rūpa hana śāstrera pramāṇe

guru-rūpe kṛṣṇa kṛpā karena bhakta-gaṇe
[*Cc Ādi* 1.45]

"According to the deliberate opinion of all revealed scriptures, the spiritual master is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa in the form of the spiritual master delivers His devotees."

śikṣā-guruke ta' jāni kṛṣṇera svarūpa
antaryāmī, bhakta-śreṣṭha, – ei dui rūpa
[*Cc Ādi* 1.47]

"One should know the instructing spiritual master to be the Personality of Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa manifests Himself as the Supersoul and as the greatest devotee of the Lord."

jīve sākṣāt nāhi tāte guru caitya-rūpe
śikṣā-guru haya kṛṣṇa-mahānta-svarūpe
[*Cc Ādi* 1. 58]

"Since one cannot visually experience the presence of the Supersoul, He appears before us as a liberated devotee. Such a spiritual master is none other than Kṛṣṇa Himself."

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His Gosvāmī followers have accepted both the *pañcharātrika-guru-paramparā* and *bhāgavata-guru-paramparā*. In fact, both conceptions establish the same meaning; the innermost purpose of both is identical. Still, *bhāgavata-paramparā* has supremacy over *pañcharātrika-guru-paramparā*. *Bhāgavata-guru-paramparā* is established on the gradations of *bhajana-niṣṭha*. Since *pañcharātrika-guru-paramparā* is included in *bhāgavata-paramparā*, the charm and superiority of *bhāgavata-paramparā* is therefore highly glorified. Moreover, there is also no restriction of time in this *bhāgavata-paramparā*.

So in the tradition of our *sampradāya* there is provision for *dīkṣā-guru, śīkṣa-guru, bhajana-guru, patha-pradarśaka-guru, caitya-guru* and so on. But we will not find any statement in the scriptures which recommends accepting a *'ṛtvik-guru'* or the *ṛtvik* tradition in order to perform one's *sādhana* of *paramārtha* (the highest transcendental goal). We do not find even in the Śaṅkara *sampradāya* any depiction of such utilization of *ṛtvik* tradition what to speak of the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*.

The *guru-paramparā* is eternal and will always continue to exist

Q: These days we do not see the tradition of *guru-paramparā* in some *sampradāyas*. Some *gurus* are falling down, unable to maintain the requirements of being a *guru* and there seems to be a lack of *sad-guru*. Therefore, since Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda has briefly mentioned *ṛtvik* in his letters, and during his manifest presence he has given *dīkṣā* by appointing *ṛtviks*, what is the harm if we accept *dīkṣā* through such a *ṛtvik* system or through his audio cassettes now that he is no longer physically present?

A: In the present age of Kali many people become irritated simply by hearing the word *'guru'* because of seeing the misconduct, the activities which are against the principles of *bhakti*, and the fall-downs of many so-called *gurus*. Thus, at the current time, some people put forward the idea that Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja was the last *sad-guru*, and after his disappearance there is no longer a *sad-guru* present in the world, nor will there be one in the future. Therefore, after his disappearance there is no need for anyone to accept any living *guru* because *ṛtviks* will carry forward this *śiṣya paramparā* (disciplic succession) and they will give *dīkṣā* only by utilizing the cassette recordings of his own voice chanting the *gāyatri-mantras*.

This conception is completely speculative and is against the injunctions of the scriptures. The *guru-paramparā* or *amnaya* line is eternal and everlasting since the time of creation. This line of

guru-paramparā is existing up to today without any break, and it will continue to exist like this in the future also. To say, "There is no *sad-guru* living in the world at present and neither will there be any in the future", is an atheistic opinion. Because Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja is such an important figure in our eternal *sampradāya* it is obvious that he would not establish anything against *guru, śāstra* or *sādhu.*

kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, śūdra kene naya
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei 'guru' haya
[Cc *Madhya* 8.128]

"Whether one is a *brāhmaṇa,* a *sannyāsī* or a *śūdra*—regardless of what he is—he can become a spiritual master if he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa."

No *sad-guru* ever makes anyone a *guru* or an *ācārya* by force. Rather, by rendering service to his *sad-guru,* becoming well-versed in *kṛṣṇa-tattva,* realizing ParaBrahmān and becoming detached from the material sense objects, a *sad-śiṣya* himself attains the qualifications of a *guru* by his *guru*'s mercy. He doesn't need any stamp or registration for this. On the other hand, we sometimes see the fall-down of a *guru* who is appointed as successor by his *guru.* If a *sad-guru* declares or appoints his qualified successor as *guru* then it is indeed proper, and if he doesn't, there is still no harm. The *guru-paramparā* will continue to exist either way. But, in no circumstance is there any provision of *ṛtviks* in *sat-sampradāya* or in the line of *guru-paramparā.*

Accepting *dīkṣā* through mechanical voice recordings?

Some people talk about accepting *dīkṣā* through the medium of the audio cassettes of great personalities after they have disappeared. There are various flaws in this ideology. Before giving *dīkṣā* a *guru* examines the characteristics, thoughts, intentions, and so on of the aspiring candidate. Similarly, for some period of time, the aspirant will also observe the *gurutva* (greatness), conduct, *bhajana* and attitude of his *guru.* When both of them are satisfied, then only is there an arrangement to give and to accept *dīkṣā.* This process is not possible through cassettes once the *guru* is no longer physically present. It is not possible for the cassette to examine the aspirant before giving *dīkṣā,* and neither is it possible for the aspirant to observe the greatness, conduct and mode of *bhajana* of the *guru* through the medium of cassettes alone.

From the history of our *sampradāya,* it is well known that Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa was a perfected saint or *guru* of Dvāpara-yuga. But yet his *sat-śiṣya,* Śrīla Madhvācārya, had direct darśana of Śrīla Vedavyāsa who had appeared about 5000 years prior to him. Despite being so qualified, ŚrīlaMadhvācārya never thought that he could become the disciple of Śrīla Vedavyāsa without the latter's physical presence. On hearing the sincere prayers of Śrīla Madhvācārya, Śrīla Vedavyāsa personally appeared before him and gave him diksa. We can observe many such examples in the scriptures. A *sad-guru* can manifest anywhere by the prayers of *sat-śiṣya.* For the common people, the process of accepting *dīkṣā* is to directly receive *kṛṣṇa-mantra* from a *sad-guru* who knows *kṛṣṇa-tattva.* But in the case of *uttama-adhikārīs,* the example of *bhāgavata-paramparā* is visible everywhere. Hence, it is not a proven fact that the cassette is a bona fide and effective medium to give *dīkṣā.*

If, in modern times, in special circumstances a *guru* has given *dīkṣā* through his representative or through cassette, this still cannot be accepted as the ultimate principle for everyone at all times and in all places. A *guru* may give *dīkṣā* through the medium of his representative or cassette to a faithful person who is living in a remote place, and cannot personally come before his *guru* due to circumstances. But this is a temporary situation arising out of extreme circumstances only. Whenever it is possible, the *guru* will himself personally give *dīkṣā.*

'Ṛtvik-guru', a contradiction of terms

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja has neither accepted nor mentioned the tradition of *ṛtviks* as *gurus* anywhere in his bona fide books. Nor did he support the tradition of *ṛtviks* in his personal letters. Whatever Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja arranged, it was most definitely not *'ṛtvik-guru'*, which is a contradiction of terms. To call it this is the cause of embarrassment for him among those who know the Vedic *śāstras*. If any of his disciples have anywhere, on the pretext of his name, made such a declaration, then after the word *'ṛtvik'*, must be added the statement 'the representative of *guru*'. And it must be understood that such representative is such only on a timely or provisional basis. Therefore the *sādhaka* of *śuddha-bhakti*, after thoroughly deliberating on these facts, must not neglect the principles of *guru-paramparā*. If there is any doubt, then it is necessary to remove it by accepting the correct understanding of *guru-paramparā*. One must accept the innermost thoughts or intentions of the *guru*, otherwise one will be deceived and misled from *śuddha-bhakti*.

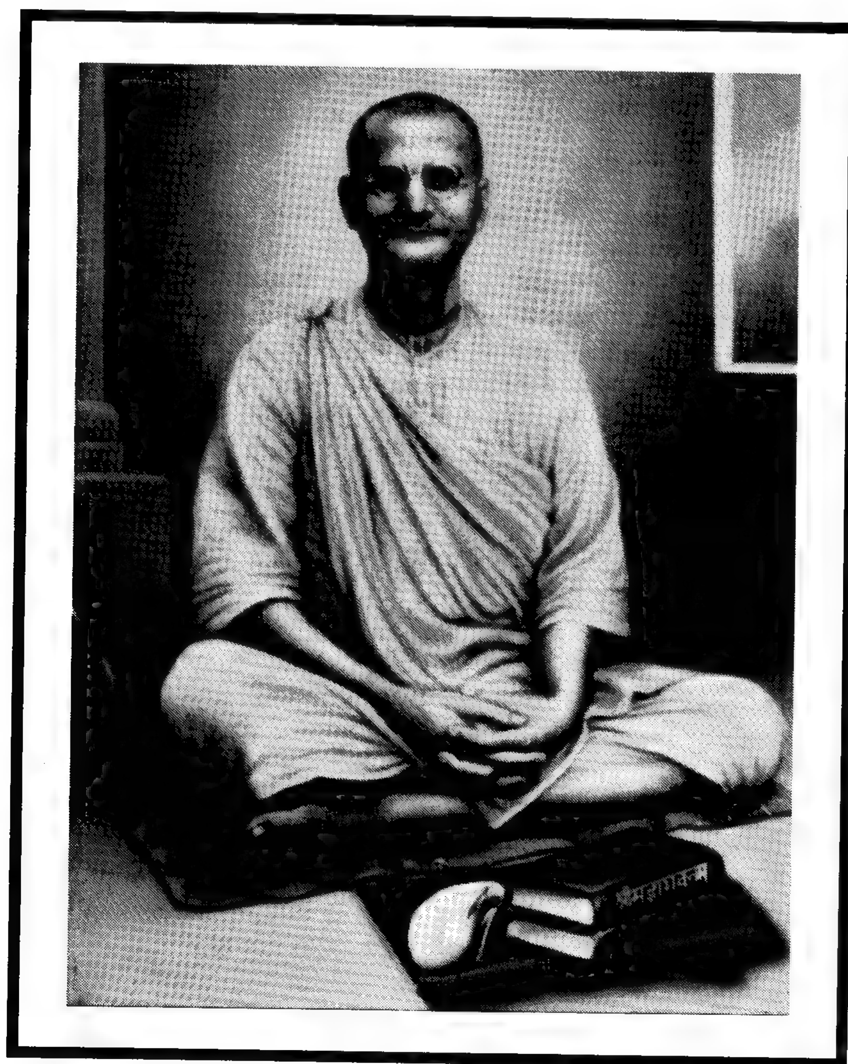
As you can see, it is very important to consider the scriptural meaning of the word *'ṛtvik.'* The term applies only when a *yajmān* undertakes a *yajña* for fulfilling his material desires. Because he, the *yajmān*, is himself ignorant of the Vedic rules for performing the *yajña*, he appoints, for the successful completion and achievement of desired results, the *ṛtviks*, who are virtuous and who know the Vedas.

'Ṛtvik-guru', an impractical concoction which is against the scriptural conclusions

In consideration of this principle, can it be conjectured that a *guru*, being ignorant of the *dīkṣā-mantras* and their conceptions, will appoint a *ṛtvik* more qualified than himself, who in turn will give *dīkṣā* to others, thus acting as the representative of the *guru*? Some people say that Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja appointed *ṛtviks* who were to give *dīkāā* to his disciples. If this statement is accepted as true, then it means they are accusing Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja of being an unqualified *guru*, an ignorant *yajmān* who, for the sake of fulfilling his material desires or perfection in spiritual life, would have appointed *ṛtviks* more qualified than himself. No, it cannot be true, for this is completely impossible. Therefore on the path toward attaining the supreme absolute reality, Bhagavān, this concocted *ṛtvik* conception is impractical and against the scriptural conclusions.

Swāmī Bhakti Vedanta Nārāyaṇa

The Charm and Superiority of the Bhāgavata-Parampara



There is no recorded account anywhere to the effect that Śrīmān Mahāprabhu has given *dīkṣā-mantra* to anyone. Therefore if the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community accepts the *anugatya* and discipleship of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, then that can only be on one basis—*bhāgavata-paramparā.*

The Charm and Superiority of the Bhāgavata-Parampara

(An excerpt from the forthcoming biography of *nitya-līlā pravista oṁ visnupāda astottara-sata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja by Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja)

In recent times ever-new questions are being invented in regard to *śrī guru-paramparā* in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. Some people are of the opinion that Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana was initiated in the Madhva *sampradāya* and that he was not a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava. Their assertion is that, in spite of his attaining the association of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, the influence of the Madhva *sampradāya* upon him was so great, that in his own literatures he has stubbornly included Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* in the Madhva *sampradāya*. And this, they claim, has been done by him without any reasonable justification. Thus they declare that he cannot be considered an *ācārya* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. Another section of ignorant persons say that *jagad-guru* Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupādajī has created a new concept named the *bhāgavata-paramparā*. In this *bhāgavata-paramparā* he has explained that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is a disciple of Vaiṣṇava Sarvabhauma Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Babaji Mahārāja, and that Śrī Gaurakisora dāsa Babaji Mahārāja is a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Some *sahajiya* Vaiṣṇavas are also presenting the doubt that Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī accepted the renounced order (*sannyāsa*) from himself, and consequently, his *guru-paramparā* cannot be considered bona fide. My most worshipable Śrīla Gurudeva has shattered all these accusations by the use of powerful logic and solid scriptural evidence. His analysis of the subject is being presented within this article.

The disciples and grand-disciples of Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda are currently preaching *suddha-kṛṣṇa-bhakti* and śrī *harināma* throughout the world as preached and practised by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. They have preached extensively all over the world. Consequently, in every prominent city, moreover, in every town and village, the streets and avenues are resounding with the sound of the holy name and young men and women are applying themselves to the cultivation of *suddha-bhakti* with great enthusiasm. They are meeting Vaiṣṇavas from India, performing *harināma-sankīrtana* together and preaching *suddha-bhakti*. Being aGītāted by this, a few ignorant, so-called Vaiṣṇavas of the *sahajiya* community are trying to mislead the common man by presenting fraudulent accusations against the Sarasvata Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava lineage. Śrīla Gurudeva has established the rational and perfect conclusion on this matter in his own essay entitled "Gauḍīya VedantĀcārya Śrī Baladeva." We are extracting some lines from that essay –

Guru-paramparā of the Commentator Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana

We are presenting before you the historical truth which is obtained upon considering the *guru-paramparā* of the commentator, Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana. First of all, he acquired specific expertise in the *bhakti-śāstra* under the guidance of *virakta-siromani* (the crest-jewel of detatched *sādhus*) Pitambara dāsa. After that, he accepted *pancaratriki-dīkṣā* from a Vaiṣṇava by the name of Śrī Rādhā Damodara dāsa, who had appeared in the seminal *brāhmaṇa* dynasty in Kanyakubja. Rādhā Damodara dāsa was the grandson of Rasikānanda Murari. He accepted *dīkṣā* from another Kanyakubjiya *brāhmaṇa*, Śrī Nayanānandadeva Gosvāmī. Rasikānanda Prabhu is the fourth person in the *pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā* of the commentator Baladeva Vidyabhusana. Śrī Rasikānanda

Prabhu was a disciple of Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu. The aforementioned Nayanānandadeva Gosvāmī was the son of Śrī Rasikānanda. The *guru* of Śrī Śyāmānanda was Śrī Hṛdaya Caitanya, whose guru was Gauridāsa Paṇḍita. Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu had bestowed His mercy upon Gauridāsa Paṇḍita. Even though Śyāmānanda Prabhu was a disciple of *ācārya* Hṛdaya Caitanya, afterwards he accepted discipleship under Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī was a disciple of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, who was a disciple of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī. Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī was a follower and associate of Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

Śiṣya-paramparā of the Commentator

An account of the *pañcarātrika-paramparā* has been given beginning from Śrīman Mahāprabhu down to Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana. Now an account of his *śiṣya-paramparā* is being given: Śrī Uddhara dāsa, referred to in some places as Uddhava dāsa, was a disciple of the commentator. Some hold the opinion that these are two different personalities. Whatever the case may be, Uddhava dāsa had a disciple named Śrī Madhusudana dāsa. Jagannātha dāsa Babaji was a disciple of this very Śrī Madhusudana dāsa. Previously, as Sarvabhauma Vaiṣṇava or prominent leader of the Vaiṣṇava community in Mathura-*maṇḍala*, Ksetra-*maṇḍala* and Gauda-*maṇḍala*, he became famous by the name of Siddha Jagannātha dāsa. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura accepted this very Jagannātha dāsa Babaji Mahārāja as his *bhajana-śikṣā-guru* by the system of *bhāgavata-paramparā*. Under the direction of Vaiṣṇava Sarvabhauma Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Babaji Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura discovered the birthplace of Śrīman Mahāprabhu at Śrīdhāma Mayapura. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was the *śikṣā-guru* or *bhajana-guru* of Śrīla Gaurakisora dāsa Babaji Mahārāja. Śrīla Gaurakisora dāsa Babaji Mahārāja, giving *dīkṣā-mantra*, etc., accepted my *gurupada-padma, om visnupada astottara-sata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, as his own disciple. Whoever is incompetent in accepting this *paramparā* is to be counted amongst one of the thirteen types of *apasampradāyas* mentioned in writing by Śrī Totarama Babaji Mahārāja. Alternatively, he may be regarded as the creator of a fourteenth *apasampradāya.*

From the aforementioned *guru-paramparā* we acquire the understanding that Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana is a follower of Śrīman Mahāprabhu within the spiritual family lineage (*parivara*) of Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu. On account of *ācārya* Śrī Śyāmānanda accepting the guidance of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, and because Jīva Gosvāmī is exclusively *rūpānuga* (a follower of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī), it therefore follows that Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana is also a *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava. Whoever does not acknowledge that Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana is a *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava, having said that he is in the line of Śrī Śyāmānanda, and thinks that he is not qualified for the topmost service mood of *unnata-ujjvala-rasa*, is certainly a deluded offender. Although Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana was initiated in *pañcarātrika-dīkṣā* by Śrī Rādhā Damodara dāsa, he also accepted *śikṣā* in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the literatures of the Gosvāmīs.

Pañcarātrika-parampara is included within the *bhāgavata*-parampara

Bhāgavata-paramparā is superior to *pañcarātrika-paramparā*. It is founded on the degree of proficiency in *bhajana* (*bhajana-niṣṭha*). The charm and superiority of *bhāgavata-paramparā* is that *pañcarātrika-paramparā* is included within it. In *bhāgavata-paramparā* there is no obstruction in regard to time. From the viewpoint of *suddha-bhakti*, both the doctrine of *pañcarātrika* and of *bhāgavata* expound synonomous opinions with the same objective. In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is said, *pancaratre bhagavate ei laksana kaya* (*Cc Madhya* 19.169). The *prakṛta-sahajiya sampradāya*, while introducing themselves as the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, accumulate offences to the lotus feet of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. Similarly, nowadays the *jati-gosvāmīs* and those who accept their remnants, such as several members of the *sahajiya, kartabhaja, kisoribhaja*, and *bhajanakhaja sampradāyas*, while proudly conceiving themselves to be the followers of Cakravarti Ṭhākura, employ various disrespectful explanations against the commentator Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana. In this way, they are growing excessively hateful and progressing towards hell.

We are presenting herein a diagram of the *pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā* and *bhāgavata-paramparā* by which readers will be able to properly appreciate the speciality of *śrī bhāgavata-paramparā*, and also understand how *pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā* is included within the *bhāgavata-paramparā*.

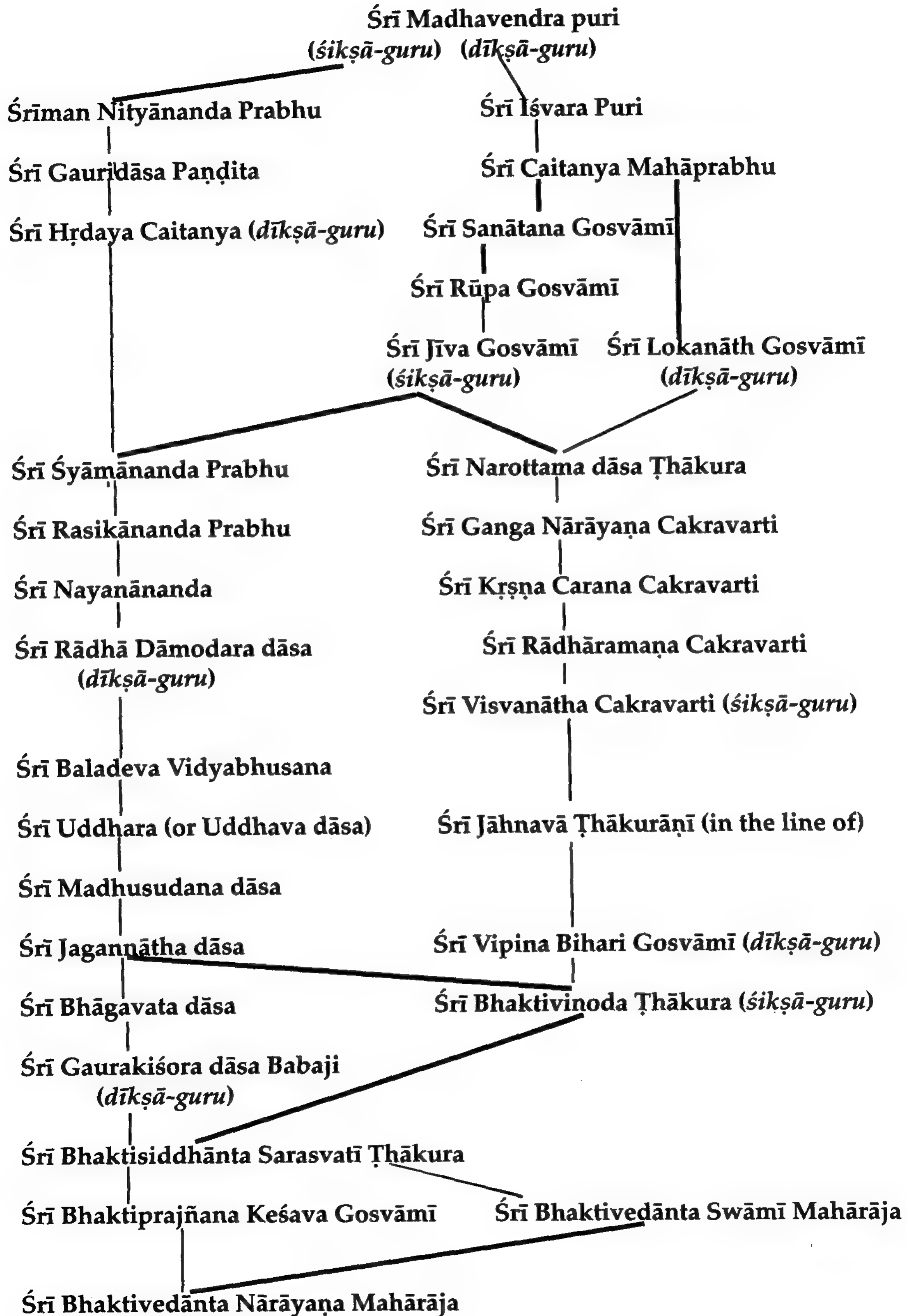
Through the medium of this diagram we will give an account of the *pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā* and *bhāgavata-paramparā* of Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu, Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, etc.:

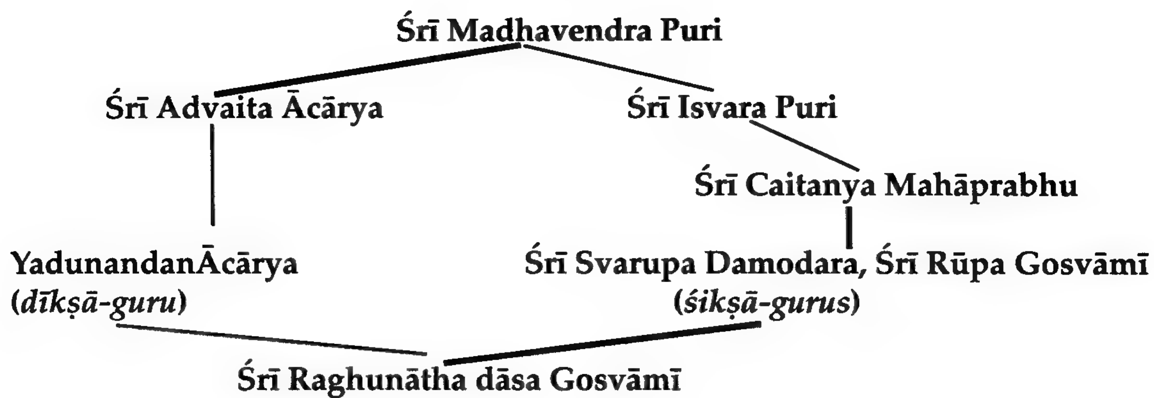
In the diagram below, the arrows indicate the following :

——— *Dīkṣā / Śikṣā* relationship (*Pañcarātrika* line)

━━━ *Śikṣā* only relationship (*Bhāgavata* line)

Diagram of the *Pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā* and *Bhāgavata-paramparā*





Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu — In *pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā* Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu's disciple is Gauridāsa Paṇḍita, and his disciple Hṛdaya Caitanya is the *dīkṣā-guru* of Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu. In *bhāgavata-paramparā* Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's disciple is Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, the disciple of Sanātana is Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, and Rūpa's disciple is Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu is the *śikṣā* disciple of this very Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. It will not be an exaggeration to mention here that in the consideration of *tattva, rasa, bhajana* and in all respects, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī was superior to Śrī Hṛdaya Caitanya. Therefore Śrī Hṛdaya Caitanya himself personally sent Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu to Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī for advanced instruction in the practice of *bhajana,* and Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu accepted the *anugatya* (guidance) of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. Thus the serious matter which is deserving of our consideration here is the question—which is superior, *pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā* or *bhāgavata-paramparā*?

Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura — In the same way, according to *pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā,* Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura's *guru* is Śrī Lokanātha dāsa Gosvāmī. Yet there is no record of Śrī Lokanātha dāsa Gosvāmī's *pañcarātrika-dīkṣā-guru* to be found anywhere. In such texts as *Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Abhidhana,* it has been stated that his *guru* is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. However, it is a well-known fact that Śrīman Mahāprabhu did not make anyone His disciple according to the *pañcarātrika-pranali* (method). Therefore, if Śrīman Mahāprabhu is the *guru* of Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī, then it is only on the basis of *bhāgavata-paramparā*. On the other hand, although Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura is the *pañcarātrika* disciple of Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī, he is also the disciple of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī in *bhāgavata-paramparā*. In the *anugatya* of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura became steeped in *bhajana-śikṣā*.

Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī — In *pañcarātrika-paramparā* Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī is a disciple of Śrī Yadunandanācārya, who is situated in the *pañcarātrika-sakha* (branch) of Śrī Advaita Ācārya. On the other hand, if we deeply consider the life history of Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, we then find that the indelible influence of the *bhajana-śikṣā* of Śrī Svarupa Damodara and Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī is very clear. Śrī Svarupa Damodara and Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī are his *gurus* in *bhāgavata-paramparā*. In this example also, if we compare *pañcarātrika-paramparā* with *bhāgavata-paramparā,* then we find that the superiority of *bhāgavata-paramparā* is shining as radiantly as the sun.

Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana — According to *pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā* Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana is a *pañcarātrika* disciple of Śrī Rādhā Damodara in the *paramparā* of Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu. On the other hand, from the viewpoint of *bhāgavata-paramparā* he is a disciple of Śrī Visvanatha Cakravarti Ṭhākura. Śrī Rādhā Damodara himself had personally sent Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana to Śrī Visvanatha Cakravarti Ṭhākura to study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and all the various Gosvāmī literatures and also to receive advanced instruction in *bhajana*. The guidance of Śrī

Visvanatha Cakravarti Ṭhākura in the life of Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana is widely known. Only under the guidance of Śrī Visvanatha Cakravarti Ṭhākura did he defeat the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas in the royal court of Galta and keep intact the service and worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govindajī. Attaining the mercy of Śrī Govindadeva, the worshipable deity of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, he composed *Śrī Govinda-bhasya*. There is certainly no room for any doubt about Śrī Visvanatha Cakravarti Ṭhākura being a *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava. Therefore, since Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana is under the guidance of Śrī Visvanatha Cakravarti Ṭhākura there is also no doubt about his *rūpānugatva*, his being a *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava. Furthermore, it is a well-known fact that, having attained the mercy of Śrī Govindadeva, he ensured the continuing service of that very deity who was the treasured life's breath of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. So from this perspective, in the light of his attaining the mercy of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and his *aradhyadeva* Śrī Govindajī, what doubt could possibly remain in regard to his *rūpānugatva*?

Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura — According to the *pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā*, Śrī Vipina Bihari Gosvāmī, who is situated in the *pañcarātrika-paramparā* of Śrī Śrī Jāhnavā Ṭhākurani, is the *dīkṣā-guru* of Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. On the other hand Vaiṣṇava Sarvabhauma Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Babaji Mahārāja is his *bhajana-śikṣā-guru* in *bhāgavata-paramparā*. Jagannātha dāsa Babaji Mahārāja is a disciple of the famous Madhusudana dāsa Babaji Mahārāja in the *paramparā* of Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana. In regard to *tattva-jñāna, bhajana-śikṣā*, etc., it is not necessary to say that Vaiṣṇava Sarvabhauma Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Babaji Mahārāja is superior to Śrī Vipina Bihari Gosvāmī. No one can deny that the stamp of the guidance (*anugatya*) of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Babaji Mahārāja is imprinted in the life of Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura — According to *pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā* his *dīkṣā-guru* is Śrī Gaurakisora dāsa Babaji Mahārāja, who, by *pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā*, is situated in the branch of Śrī Jāhnavā Ṭhākurānī. Śrīla Babaji Mahārāja accepted the attire of a renunciate (*vesa*) from a disciple of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Babaji Mahārāja, namely Śrī Bhāgavata dāsa Babaji Mahārāja. Thus by *bhāgavata-paramparā*, Śrī Gaurakisora dāsa Babaji Mahārāja is in the branch of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Babaji Mahārāja. In this way, Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is in the *paramparā* of Śrī Jāhnavā Ṭhākurani by *pañcarātrika-paramparā*, and he has been connected with Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Babaji Mahārāja in *bhāgavata-paramparā*.

By shedding light on his life history, it is established that he made the practices, precepts, *bhajana-pranali* and fulfillment of the aspirations of Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura the sole aim and object of his life. Thus, in *bhāgavata-paramparā* his *guru* was Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, whose *guru* was Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Babaji Mahārāja. Therefore there is not even the least opportunity to raise a finger against the *guru-paramparā* of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the founder-*ācārya* of the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭhas.

Several additional facts worthy of our consideration on the subject of *pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā* and *bhāgavata-paramparā*:

(1) The *guru* of lower *rasa*

If a *pañcarātrika-dīkṣā-guru* in his *siddha-svarupa* (constitutional spiritual form) is situated in a comparatively lower *rasa* than his disciple, then how will he give *bhajana-śikṣā* pertaining to the more elevated *rasa*? In this situation, the disciple must go elsewhere and take shelter of such a Vaiṣṇava who is qualified to administer the appropriate superior guidance. For example, Śrī Hṛdaya Caitanya, in *kṛṣṇa-lila*, was an associate in *sakhya-rasa*, whereas his disciple Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu (Duhkhi Kṛṣṇa dāsa) was an associate in *madhura-rasa*. Therefore Śrī Hṛdaya Caitanya himself had personally sent Duhkhi Kṛṣṇa dāsa to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī to receive higher *bhajana-śikṣā* pertaining to *madhura-rasa*.

(2) The lesser qualified *guru*

The *guru* and disciple in *pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā* may be in the same *rasa*, however the *guru* may not be so highly qualified. Under such circumstances, for higher *bhajana-śikṣā* the disciple must go and take shelter of another *uttama* Vaiṣṇava who will be called his *guru* in *bhāgavata-paramparā*.

From the above-mentioned two considerations, we can conclude that there are some inherent defects in the *pañcarātrika* process, whereas *bhāgavata-paramparā*, being completely free from these defects, is flawless in all respects.

(3) Śrīman Mahāprabhu is not *pañcarātrika-guru* of anyone

All members of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* consider themselves to be the followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, accepting Him as *jagad-guru*. However, upon what basis do they consider that they are His followers and accept that He is their *guru*? Śrīman Mahāprabhu is not anyone's *guru* in *pañcarātrika-paramparā*, although He Himself is a disciple of Śrī Isvara Puri in *pañcarātrika-paramparā*. There is no recorded account anywhere to the effect that Śrīman Mahāprabhu has given *dīkṣā-mantra* to anyone. Therefore if the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community accepts the *anugatya* and discipleship of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu then that can only be on one basis, and that basis is—*bhāgavata-paramparā*.

(4) All Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are *rūpānuga* on basis of *bhāgavata-paramparā* only

Each and every Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava is proud to call himself "*rūpānuga*". But let us consider this point: How many people did Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī make his disciple by the *pañcarātrika* method? Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī is his one and only *dīkṣā* disciple. So on what basis do the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community accept Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī as their *guru*? Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī himself is also not a *dīkṣā* disciple of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Therefore how is it possible to be a follower of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and at the same time be a follower of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu? Even Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī who is the *śikṣā-guru* of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has no second thoughts about calling himself *rūpānuga*. The basis of all these examples is one—*bhāgavata-paramparā*. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī is the disciple of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community considers Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī to be their *guru* only on the basis of *bhāgavata-paramparā*.

Who is the *pañcarātrika-dīkṣā-guru* of Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī? He has not mentioned the name of his *pañcarātrika-dīkṣā-guru* in any of his literatures. He has described the names of his *śikṣā-gurus* in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Adi* 1.37:

ei chaya guru—śikṣā-guru ye amara, tan'-sabara pada-padme koti nāmaskara

And at the end of each chapter of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is written:

sri-rupa-raghunatha -pade yara asa, caitanya caritamrta kahe Kṛṣṇa *dasa*

By these statements he has accepted Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī as his main *śikṣā-gurus*. Thus he has also accepted them as *gurus* on the basis of *bhāgavata-paramparā*.

From these facts it becomes thoroughly obvious that *bhāgavata-paramparā*, which includes *pañcarātrika-paramparā*, always shines forth brilliantly. Therefore, whoever ignores these facts and casts aspersions upon the *guru-pranali* of Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, or whoever doubts that they are *rūpānuga*, is certainly a staunch opponent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and a secret agent of Kali.

Thus, whatever opinion my most worshipable Śrīla Gurudeva has written on the subject of the *guru-pranali* of Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana, and also in regard to *pañcarātrika-guru-paramparā* and

bhāgavata-paramparā, is both logical and fully in agreement with the established conclusions of the scriptures (*śāstra-siddhānta*).

Sri Gurudeva and the Svarupa of the Jiva

The following article is an excerpt from the biography of nitya-lila pravista om visnupada astottara-sata Sri Srimad Bhakti Prajnana Kesava Gosvami Maharaja written by Srila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja. Herein we find an answer to a most vital question concerning the eternal form of the jiva soul.

In 1955, on the occasion of Karttika-vrata, niyamaseva, the 84 kosa Vraja Mandala-Parikrama was brought to a successful conclusion under the guidance of Sri Gaudiya Vedanta Samiti. On completion of the parikrama, a group of highly proficient sannyasi disciples who had taken shelter of the divine feet of Srila Prabhupada came from other Gaudiya Mathas to Sri Keshavaji Gaudiya Matha in Mathura to meet with Sri Gurudeva. Some of the finest sannyasis and brahmacaris of Srila Prabhupada had also assembled together with Srila Gurudeva during the parikrama. Thus, that day, because so many godbrothers had assembled together in one place, a special ista-gosthi ensued.

In that ista-gosthi, apart from Sri Gurudeva, many prominent sannyasis and brahmacaris were present such as: Prapujyacarana Sri Srimad Bhakti Raksaka Sridhara Maharaja, Sri Srimad Bhakti Bhudeva Srauti Maharaja, Sri Srimad Bhakti Vicara Yayavara Maharaja, Sri Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhava Maharaja, Sri Narottamananda Brahmacari (Sri Srimad Bhakti Kamala Madhusudana Maharaja), Sri Mahananda Brahmacari (Sri Srimad Bhakti Aloka Paramahamsa Maharaja), Sri Srimad Bhakti Vikasa Hrsikesa Maharaja, Sri Srimad Bhakti Vijnana Asrama Maharaja, Sri Srimad Bhakti Prapana Damodara Maharaja and Sri Srimad Bhakti Jivana Janardana Maharaja. Among them, Sripada Bhakti Vikasa Hrsikesa Maharaja was the youngest, but he was very inquisitive about tattva. Full of humility, he joined his palms and politely said, "For a long time I have had doubt in regard to the svarupa of the jiva. I have scrutinized many Gosvami-granthas, I have also asked my senior god-brothers, but until now my doubt has not been dispelled. In Sri Caitanya Caritamrta, in the context of Sanatana Siksa, it has been stated that the jiva is the nitya dasa, eternal servant of Krsna manifested from His tatastha sakti-

jivera svarupa haya krsnera nitya-dasa
krsnera tatastha sakti bhedabheda prakasa
(C.C. M. 20.108)

By this verse it seems that the quality of being the servant of Krsna is eternally latent in the very constitution of the jiva. Consequently his service, his name, his form etc. must be present in some form or another in his constitutional nature which is now covered by maya. On the other hand, he is a transformation of tatastha sakti so his svarupa should also be tatastha (marginal).

'guru-krsna prasade paya bhaktilata bija' (Cc-M-19.151)

From this is seems that the svarupa of the jiva is that he is an infinitesimal particle of consciousness (anucit). By the mercy of guru and krsna, he obtains the bhakti-lata-bija (seed of the creeper of devotion), and the nature of his perfected condition will be in accordance with the nature of the bija he has received. Srila Narottama Thakura, in Sri Prema Bhakti Chandrika has also expressed the same idea.-

sadhane bhavibe jaha   siddhadehe paibe taha   ragapathera ei se upaya

"According to the mood which is cultivated in the stage of practice, the appropriate siddha deha is attained. This is the method for traversing the path of spontaneous devotion."

This verse also informs us that perfection will be in accordance with whichever type of sadhana is practised.

In the eyes of ordinary people, these statements appear to be contradictory. Is it that some specific service tendency and so on is eternally in the nitya svarupa of the jiva, and that perfection is attained accordingly? Or is it that a specific perfect condition is attained according to one's method of devotional practice? Kindly please drive away my confusion about this matter."

On hearing this question, Prapujya carana Yayavara Maharajaji became overjoyed and humbly requested Pujyapada Sri Srimad bhakti Raksaka Sridhara Maharaja to give an answer. Prapujyacarana Sridhara Maharajaji was highly knowledgeable in the vaisnava sastras and also a scholar of philosophy. He began to give the answer to this profound question.-

"The nature of the jiva is likened to an atomic conscious particle of the spiritual sun, Sri Krsna. In the gosvami granthas the jiva has been described as the vibhinnamsa tattva, of brahma. The meaning of vibhinnamsa tattva is that Bhagavan possesses aghatana-ghatana-patiyasi sakti, the potency to make the impossible possible. When Bhagavan is equipped only with His atomic conscious jiva sakti, then at that time his expansion (amsa) is called a vibhinnamsa jiva. However when that same Bhagavan is replete with all of His potencies, then His expansion is called a svamsa. Thus the vibhinnamsa jivas are eternal. It is certain that their methods of bhagavata-seva, their names, forms and so on are inherent. Yet, because he is covered by maya, the jiva's transcendental form and characteristics remain concealed. By the grace of Bhagavan, when in the course of doing bhajan in the company of sadhus he becomes freed from maya, then whatever type of svarupa he has, that same svarupa becomes manifest.

But it is also certain that without sadhu-sanga his release from maya and the manifestation of his svarupa are both quite impossible. Therefore sadhu-sanga is also obligatory and unavoidable. If it is taken for granted that the svarupa of the jiva becomes manifested corresponding to the type of sadhu sanga, then many discepancies arise. For example, even by the association of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu or his associates, the hearts of Anupama Gosvami and Murari Gupta could not change. Murari Guptaji is considered to be the parikara of Sri Ramachandraji, Hanuman. Through the medium of Hari-katha, Sriman Mahaprabhu pointed out that, in comparison to Sri Ramachandra, Krsna is adorned with more sweetness, and furthermore, Krsna is avatari, the origin of all avataras. After hearing from Mahaprabhu, Murari Guptaji vowed to give up Sri Ramachandraji and to do Krsna-bhajan. But the next day when he came before Sri Mahaprabhu he began to cry and said to Him, "I had taken a vow before you to do Sri Krsna-bhajan, but the whole night I could not sleep. I have offered my head at the feet of Sri Ramachandraji and I cannot give him up. On the other hand, I cannot transgress your order. In both situations my life will leave me!"

As he went on speaking, he fell down at the feet of Sri Mahaprabhu. Lifting him up, Sriman Mahaprabhu embraced him and said, "Your life is so fortunate. You are an eternal associate of Sri Ramachandra. The way in which you are serving Him is auspicious for you. I have become filled with joy upon seeing your ecstatic sentiments."

On the other hand, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu met with Sri Vyenkata Bhatta, Sri Trimalla Bhatta, Sri Prabhodananda Sarasvati and the son of Vyenkata Bhatta, Gopala Bhatta, in Sri Rangam during his tour of South India. In the context of a discussion with them, Sriman Mahaprabhu proved the pre-eminence of Vrajendranandana Sri Krsna's loveliness by acquainting them with the supremacy of the sweetness of Sri Krsna's form and so on from Srimad Bhagawatam and other scriptures, with the result that the hearts of all were changed. After accepting diksa in the krsna mantra they all became engaged in Krsna-seva following the sentiments of the Vraja-vasis.

In this example, one noteworthy point is that in the opinion of our gosvamis, Sri Prabodhananda Sarasvati is Tungavidya sakhi in Vraja-lila and Gopala Bhatta Goswami is Sri Guna Manjari. For the purpose of a pastime, they both appeared in South India, and were doing their sadhana-bhajana after having acceptetd diksa in the Sri Sampradaya. They were constitutionally gopis of Vraja. Although they had been initiated in the Sri Sampradaya earlier in their lives, by the the influence of the association of Sriman Mahaprabhu they were attracted to Sri Krsna-seva. In the same way, Sri Rupa and Sanatana told their

younger brother Sri Vallabha (or Anupama), about the beauty and sweetness of Sri Krsna's svarupa and the ultimate superiority of his loving dalliance (prema vilasa). They also advised him to do Krsna-bhajana. Anupama was greatly influenced on hearing the words of his brothers. He took diksa in the krsna-mantra and expressed the desire to do Krsna-bhajana. However early the next morning, he fell at the feet of his elder brothers, and crying he said, "I have sold my head at the feet of Sri Raghunathaji. Please be merciful to me so that I may see His lotus feet birth after birth. My heart breaks simply at the thought of giving up His lotus feet."

raghunathera padapadma chadana na jaya
chadivar mana haile prana phati jaya
(C.C. Antya 4.42)

Sri Rupa and Sanatana were very happy to hear the words of their younger brother. Praising and congratulating him, they took him in their arms and embraced him. From this it is evident that sadhu-sanga assists in manifesting the svarupa of the jiva, but sadhu-sanga cannot change his svarupa."

Having thus spoken, Prapujya-carana Sridhara Maharajaji requested our gurupada-padma, Sri Srimad Bhakti Prajnana Kesava Goswami Maharaja to say something on this subject. Srila Gurudeva said, "Whatever we have seen and deliberated upon from Gaudiya Vaisnava literature definitely supports your conclusion. The jiva has his own siddha-svarupa. His inherent name, form and so on are all eternal. Among the various individual jivas, each has his own separate svarupa. Being covered by maya, the jiva has forgotten his intrinsic identity. When by good fortune he obtains sadhu-sanga and the mercy of Guru, gradually maya begins to go away, and his svarupa begins to manifest. To illustrate this procedure a natural example can be given. Just as different types of seeds such as a mango seed, a jackfruit seed and so on are sown in the same piece of land on the bank of a river and are watered by the same water of the river, the same sunlight shines upon them, and they receive the same wind, still, different types of plants or trees come from the different types of seeds. Also, different types of fruits will grow on them. Although they are raised and nourished by exactly the same soil, water, air and sunlight, it is not possible that only one single type of plant or fruit can come from all those different types of seeds.

It is also a fact that without water, air, sunlight and so on, fructified seeds cannot completely manifest their inherent potential forms. On the other hand it is also true that, although exposed to the same association of the natural elements, different types of seeds manifest their inherent natures as different types of trees that possess their own particular fruits and flowers. Although these features are not manifest visibly in the seed, nevertheless the seedling, the tree, its leaves, branches, fruits, flowers, age, flavour and all characteristics are present in an unmanifest or latent form within the seed. This is invariably the case.

In the very same way, the constitutional name, form, bodily limbs, nature and everything is included in a latent or unmanifest form in the constitution of the jiva. By the association of sad-guru and vaisnavas, when the essence of hladini and samvit arise on the svarupa of the jiva, then whatever constitutional form the jiva has within him gradually begins to be revealed.

Another material example can be given. At the time of a particular stellar constellation known as Svati-naksatra, when the raindrops coming down from the sky fall upon five different objects namely, an oyster, a banana tree, a snake, an elephant or the hoof of a cow, then in each one of these agents a different reaction is seen to manifest. In the oyster a pearl is produced, from a banana tree camphor is produced, from the snake a precious jewel is produced, from the elephant the gajamukta (elephant pearl) is produced, and from the hoof of a cow goracana is produced. Here, just as one type of water causes different substances to manifest on account of the different types of recepticles, similarly, by the influence of the association of one guru or one vaisnava, service in different rasas and different varieties of spiritual perfection are perceived in different disciples.

In Jaiva Dharma, Sri Vrajanatha and Vijaya Kumara both together heard everything from one guru, Raghunatha dasa babaji. Still their respective tastes manifested differently. Although they both attained

perfection, Vrajanatha attained perfection in sakhya rasa and Vijaya Kumara attained perfection in madhura rasa.

According to Sri Brhad Bhagavatamrta, Sri Narada Gosvami and Sri Uddhava both saw Gopa Kumara, and first of all ascertained that constitutionally he was a parikara (eternal spiritual associate) of *sakhya-rasa*. His natural sakhya-bhava did not change by the influence of anyone's association including even that of Sri Narada Gosvami, Uddhavaji, Hanumanji and others. If one's inherent service could change, then why did Uddhava's svarupa not change by the association of the gopis? The confidential purport is that, as long as a sadhaka who is in the stage of practice does not realize his svarupa, then he performs sadhana-bhajana according to his association. However, when his *anarthas* have gone away, his inherent mood in the form of one particular taste (*ruci*) or another begins to disclose his identity. Noticing his natural taste and so on, Sri Gurudeva merely indicates his relationship and eleven types of bhava, and thereby enables him to make progress in bhajana.

Sometimes a sadhaka who by nature is of a higher rasa can engage in service or worship in a lower rasa by the association of devotees who are themselves in dasya and sakhya rasa. However later, when he is not satisfied, and when he comes into higher association while giving up the previous moods, then at that time he attains his inherent bhavas.

The opinion of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura, the seventh Goswami, is quite clear on this subject. In his explanation of the verse, "*ceto darpana marjanam*" (Sri Siksastakama 1), he has written—

Ceto darpana marjanam ityadina jivasya svarupa tattvam vivrtam. tatha srimajjvaracaranah jivakhya-samastasakti visistasya paramatattvasya khalvamsa ekojivah. tatha srimad vedanta bhasyakaro 'pi—vibhucaitanyamisvaro 'nucaitanyam jivah, nityam jnanadigunakatram asmad arthatvam cobhayatra jnanasyapi jnatrtvam prakasasya raveh prakasakatvavadavidruddham. etena jivasya nutam citsvarupatvam suddhaharikara suddhacitta— suddhadehavisistatvarica jnapitam. paresa vaismukhyat bahiranga-bhavavistatvacca suddhahankaragata suddha-cittasyavidyamala dusanamapi sucitam.

"The correct conception of the svarupa-tattva of the jiva has been given by the verse beginning with "ceto darpana marjanam. Srila Jiva Gosvami's siddhanta on this subject is that when the Supreme Absolute Truth is equipped only with the sum total of the jiva sakti, then his minute expansion is known as a jiva. The compiler of the Sri Govinda Bhasya commentary on Vedanta Sutra, Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana has also expressed the same opinion— isvara is the supremely conscious being whereas the jiva is a minutely conscious being. Isvara is eternally radiant with all auspicious and unlimited, transcendental qualities. He has a completely pure ahankara (ego). He is both the embodiment of knowledge and the knower. In the same way the jiva also has his own pure svarupa. Most of the aggregate of the qualities of isvara are also present partially in the jiva. The jiva also has a pure ahankara. This conception is not opposed to reasoning because the qualities of the sun are also seen in the atomic particles of sunshine. Similarly the qualities of paratattva are also observed to be partially present in the jivas. When the jiva is averse to Paramesvara, his pure svarupa is concealed by maya. Conversely, when he becomes inclined towards Paramesvara, the curtain of the covering potency, maya, is withdrawn, and thus the jiva's pure svarupa and qualities are uncovered. Immediately thereafter, he has the direct perception of his own svarupa. From this siddhanta it is evident that the jiva is an infinitessimal atomic particle of consciousness. He has an inherent spiritual identity, cinmaya svarupa. His pure ahankara, pure consciousness, pure form and method of service and so on, are also definitely in this svarupa. As the sadhaka jiva goes on hearing and chanting, pure bhakti appears in his heart, and the function of the essence of hladini and samvit, known as bhakti-devi, removes all other desires and aspirations except for the service of bhagavan. Having dispelled avidya (ignorance), the jivas's gross and subtle coverings are both destroyed by the vidyavrtti function of the knowledge potency. At once the jiva's constitutional pure, transcendental body, is caused to manifest. Moreover, for those who are eligible to taste madhura-rasa, their purely spiritual gopi body is also caused to manifest.

—sravana— kirtanadisadhanasamaye yada suddhabhaktirudeti tada svasya 'vidyatvam parihrtya vidyaya cidetara vitrsnajanani sapi jivasy sthulalingamayasaupadhikadeha-dvayam vinasya tasy svarupagata

suddhacid-deham adhikara bhedena madhurarasasvadanayatanam. gopika dehamapi prakatayati."

In Prema Bhakti Candrika it is stated:

'sadhane bhavibe jaha siddha dehe paibe taha'

"According to the mood which is cultivated in the stage of practice, the appropriate siddha deha is attained."

And in Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya (8.51) we find the statement:

'yasya yatsangatih pumso manivat syat sa tad gunah.'

"As a crystal reflects the color of those objects which are brought into its proximity, a person's nature will be exactly in accordance with the association he keeps."

It is necessary to reconcile these two considerations. Their meaning is not that the svarupa of the jiva is like a spotlessly clear crystal and according to association his siddhasvarupa appears. Rather, when the conditioned soul undertakes the activities of suddha bhakti, such as hearing and chanting in the association of a pure sad-guru and vaisnavas, then at that time, by the influence of that svarupa siddha bhakti, the impurity of avidya, anarthas and so on begin to go very far away, and a semblance (abhasa) of the natural characteristics of the soul begins to manifest. Just for such a sadhaka Srila Rupa Goswami has given the instruction— 'svajatiyasaye snigdhe' (Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu 1.2.91) that we should associate with vaisnavas who are snigdha, affectionately disposed towards us, and who are svajatiya asaya, established in the same mood of loving service for which we aspire. At that time, the diksa guru, sravana guru or siksa guru, upon seeing the internal characteristics of the sadhaka, gives ekadasa bhava (the eleven items of the identity of the spiritual body) as expounded in Sri raganuga marga for his advancement on the path of bhajana. In this way, the sadhaka does bhava bhajana by this internally conceived siddha-deha to bring about the manifestation of his siddha-svarupa. The following sloka has been given in Srimad Bhagavatam as an example to illustrate this very point.

kitah pesaskrta ruddhah
kudyayam tamanusmaran
samrambha bhaya yogena
vindate tat svarupatam

"A type of wasp (bhrngi) confines a caterpillar by force in his hole in a wall, and by continuously thinking of the wasp out of fear and anxiety, the caterpillar becomes a wasp."
(Bhag 7.1.28)

The same principle is also applicable in relation to the sadhakas of raganuga bhakti. At the time of sadhana, as they go on continuously thinking about serving Sri Krsna and his pastime associates by thier internally conceived bodies, they also become totally absorbed, and finally, giving up their gross and subtle material bodies, they take birth in Vraja corresponding to their internally conceived siddha-deha, and they attain that very same service as previously contemplated.

Thus the constitutional name, appearance and mood of the jiva is present and remains latent in an unmanifest form even in the conditioned stage. That svarupa is merely illuminated by the mercy of svarupa sakti, specifically by the action of the essence of hladini and samvit. Srila Rupa Goswami has written in Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu (1.2.2):

nitya siddhasya bhavasya
prakatyam hrdi sadhyata

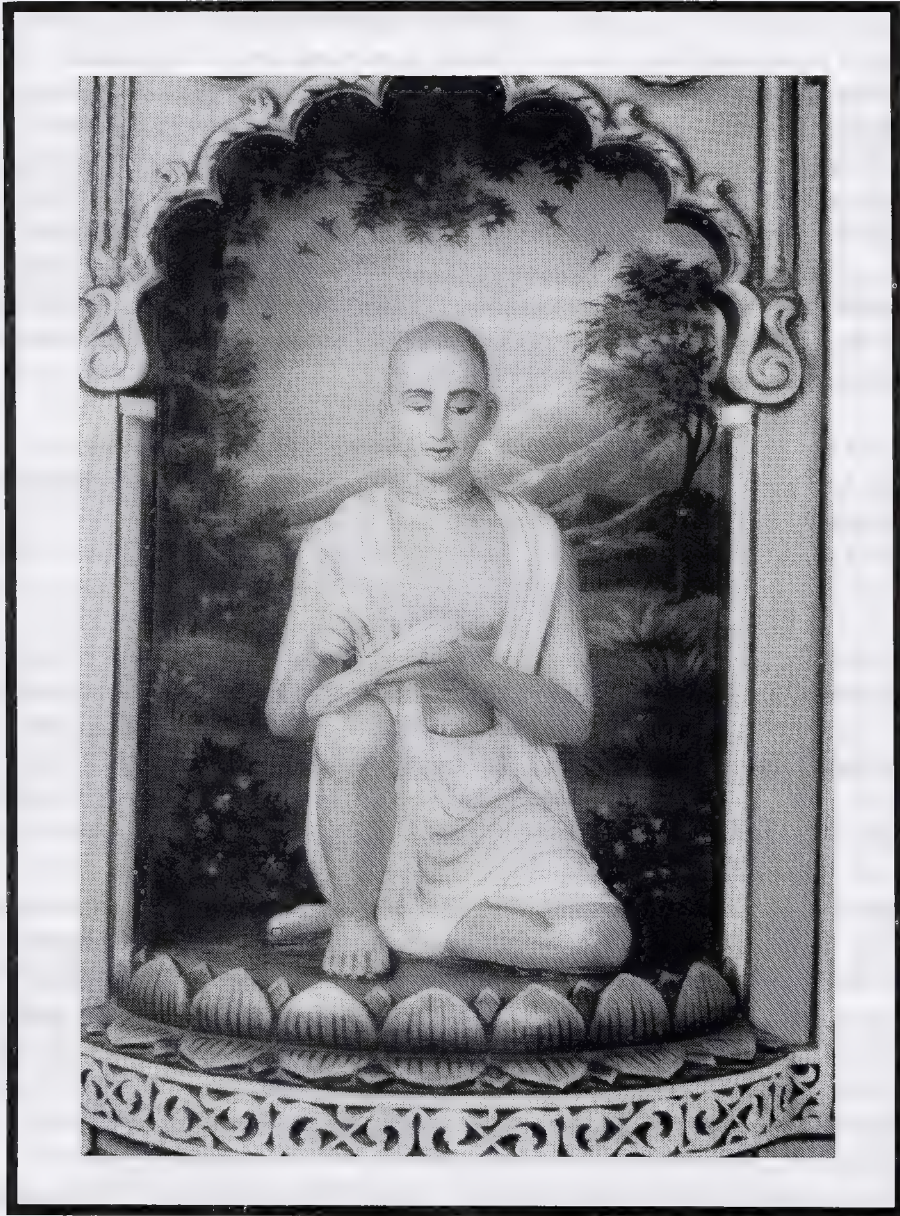
It is not that by sadhana something entirely new is obtained. Rather, sadhana is performed exclusively to

bring about the manifestation of that eternally perfect bhava which is in the svarupa of the jiva."

The assembled vaisnavas were extremely delighted to hear such an elaborate presentation. Especially Sripada Vikasa Hrsikesa Maharaja expressed his gratitude and said, "I am eternally indebted to you, because today a doubt we had harbored for a long time has been dispelled."

Rūpānuga-Guru-Varga

The Givers of the Highest Prema



I want to speak something about Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja's *siddhānta*, why he went to the Western countries, and why we are so much indebted to him. We should understand all of these things, otherwise we cannot truly know him, and we cannot enter into the realm of *sādhana*

Rūpānuga-Guru-Varga
The Givers of the Highest Prema

Introduction

In this chapter we have compiled various excerpts from the lectures of Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja given by him in various locations around the world on his international preaching tours. The title for this compilation, "Rūpanuga-Guru-Varga, The Givers of the Highest Prema," was selected to convey the principle theme which he often expresses, the reasons for the descent of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He stresses repeatedly and most emphatically that without understanding who Śrīman Mahāprabhu actually is, without understanding what He came to this world to give, and without understanding His own primary purpose for His appearance in this combined form of Śrīmatī Rādhikā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it is never possible to fully take advantage of the great and mysterious treasure established in this world by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and the *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya*. In this context also, he reveals most emphatically that Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja was a true *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava of the highest order, being a *parikara*. a direct associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and thus his mission was identical to that of his Divine Lord and Master. He warns that those who consider themselves to be preaching on his behalf should learn to fully understand and appreciate the supremacy of his ultimate message. Without the proper conception they will miss the broad scope of his mission, and in its place sectarianism and improper conduct will arise.

The remainder of the chapter deals with subjects ranging from how to honour and associate with pure Vaiṣṇavas, and how to recognize and truly follow a bona fide *guru*, to properly understanding the greater family of Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu.



I want to speak something about Śrīla Swāmījī Mahārāja's *siddhānta*, why he went to the Western countries, and why we are so much indebted to him. We should understand all of these things, otherwise we cannot truly know him, and we cannot enter into the realm of *sādhana* and *bhajana*.

What Caitanya Mahāprabhu Came To Give

A few years ago, in Vṛndāvana, I explained some important *siddhānta* (conclusive truths), but many of the devotees in general did not correctly understand what I spoke. I spoke on the verse from the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *anarpita-carim cirat karunayavatirnah kalau*. This means that after a very long period, one complete day of Brahmā, which comprises 1000 Kali-yuga cycles, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in this world. He is Kṛṣṇa Himself, but He has accepted the beauty and mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. As the combined form of Śrī Rādhikā and Kṛṣṇa, He is *rāsarāja-mahābhāva*. This name contains a very special and esoteric description of the form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Sacinandana Gaurahari, given in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

Lord Caitanya advented in Mayapura, Śrī Navadvīpa-*dhāma*, only to give a most confidential and hidden treasure. Even for greatly exalted devotees this treasure is very mysterious. Lord Caitanya came to distribute this with His own two hands, and not only with two hands, but with *lakhs* and *lakhs* of hands. In other words, all the devotees of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu were His hands. The Lord's associates did not consider anyone's qualification. Even tigers, bears, serpents, creepers and trees, whoever saw the lovely appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and whoever heard Him calling, "O Kṛṣṇa, where are You? Where are You?" became devotees. They began

to sing and weep, and they received *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has thus descended to this world particularly to give this *prema*. He did not come only to establish the *yuga-dharma* or to simply act as *bhakta-raksa*, protecting His devotees from demons. The primary purpose of His advent was to establish this—

anarpita-carim cirat karunayavatirnah kalau
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasam sva-bhakti-sriyam
harih purata-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandipitah
sada Hṛdaya-kandare sphuratu vah saci-nandanah

"May that Lord, who is known as the son of Śrīmatī Sacidevi, be transcendentally situated in the innermost chambers of your heart. Resplendent with the radiance of molten gold, He has appeared in the age of Kali by His causeless mercy, to bestow what no incarnation ever offered before: the most sublime and elevated mellow of devotional service, the mellow of conjugal love." [*Cc Adi* 1.4]

Śrīman Mahāprabhu also established the *yuga-dharma* through *nāma-sankīrtana*. He did this through the medium of Mahāviṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, Nrsiṁhadeva and the other *avataras*, all of whom were contained within Himself, within His own body. Because all the *avataras* were within Him, no other incarnation was required to perform the function of establishing the *yuga-dharma* and giving mercy to Jagāi and Madhāi. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu did all this Himself. He fulfilled the wish of Advaita Ācārya to very quickly appear. He preached and gave *kṛṣṇa-prema* through the chanting of the holy name. He tasted the moods of Śrīmatī Rādhikā and He fulfilled all His other purposes. Amongst all His purposes however, two were prominent, as described in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*—to give *kṛṣṇa-prema* and to taste the moods of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

Two Types of Unnatojjvala-rasa

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has come only for *unnatojjvala-rasa*. What is this *unnatojjvala-rasa*? It is the *gopīs'* mood of service to Kṛṣṇa, and particularly it is the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Don't think that the use of the word *gopī* is *sahajiyaism*. If this were the case, then Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja (the author of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (the author of this *śloka*) and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu (the embodiment of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*) would all be *sahajiyas*—because this verse is the *maṇgalācarana* (invocation) and main verse of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

Unnatojjvala-rasa is of two kinds: the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā and *gopīs* like Lalita, Visakha, Citra, etc., and also the mood of the *palya-dāsīs*, the maidservants of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. The *palya-dāsīs* of Śrīmatī Rādhikā do not want to serve Kṛṣṇa if He is without Rādhikā. If Kṛṣṇa, alone, is calling them, they will not go to Him, and they do not want to personally taste Him in any way. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has come to distribute the mood of these maidservants, like Rūpa-mañjarī and Lavaṇga-mañjarī, in their service to Śrīmatī Rādhikā and Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīmatī Rādhikā's mood cannot be given; it is Hers exclusively. As Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Kṛṣṇa fully tasted Her three moods:

sri-rādhāyah pranaya-mahima kidrso vanayaiva-
svadyo yenadbhuta-madhurima kidrso va madiyah
saukhyam casya mad-anubhāvatah kidrsam veti lobhat
tad-bhāvadhyah samajani saci-garbha-sindhau harinduh

"Desiring to understand the glory of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's love, the wonderful qualities in Him that She alone relishes through Her love, and the happiness She feels when She realizes the sweetness of His love, the Supreme Lord Hari, richly endowed with Her emotions, appears from the womb of Śrīmatī Sacidevi, as the moon appears from the ocean." [*Cc Ādi* 1.6]

The pleasure that Śrīmatī Rādhikā experiences in serving and seeing Kṛṣṇa cannot be given

to anyone, but the mood of the maidservant *gopīs* can be given. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has therefore come only to give this—the mood of service to Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the mood of leaning more towards Her service than towards Kṛṣṇa's, but ultimately serving both.

Kṛṣṇa Prema is our Supreme Object of Life—Not Kṛṣṇa Himself

prema-rasa-niryasa karite asvadana
raga-marga bhakti loke karite pracarana
rasika-sekhara kṛṣṇa parama-karuna
ei dui hetu haite icchara udgama

"The Lord's desire to appear was born from two reasons: He wanted to taste the sweet essence of the mellows of love of God, and He wanted to propagate devotional service in the world on the platform of spontaneous attraction. Thus He is known as supremely jubilant and as the most merciful of all. "[*Cc Ādi* 4.15-16]

Kṛṣṇa is *rasika-sekhara*. Do you know the meaning of *rasika-sekhara*? He is the taster, the enjoyer of all *rasas*. He is the ocean of *prema-rasa*, an endless ocean. There is no limit to the depth of the ocean of His *rasa*. In a general sense, all scriptures glorify Kṛṣṇa in this way. However, according to Gauḍīya *siddhānta* Śrīmatī Rādhikā is an even greater ocean of *rasa* than Kṛṣṇa. If He were to dive into that ocean, He Himself would not be able to fathom its depth. Thus Kṛṣṇa Himself is not the object of life, the *prayojana*, but rather, *kṛṣṇa-prema* is our object.

Strong Impressions in the Heart by Hearing

I have discussed the *unnatojjvala-rasa* that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted to taste the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā as well as the *unnatojjvala-rasa* that He wanted to distribute among all qualified souls. Though I will give many explanations of our *siddhāntas*, most persons will not be able to understand. But those whose hearts are pure, who have served an elevated Vaiṣṇava and are associating with him, may understand. Even Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Lord Kṛṣṇa could not give this understanding to all, and so I also cannot give it to all. But I think that those who have come to hear surely have past impressions (impressions made on the heart from previous lives of devotional activities) of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's philosophy. That is why they have come to join us from different parts of the world and are traveling so far to hear this. They must have some impression of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's family of devotees. If they continue associating, then by hearing all these truths they can gradually understand and realize them. Certainly a very strong impression will be made in their hearts. Those who have no interest in this, on the other hand, will not understand it, and so they will not come to hear.

The Speciality of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and the Gauḍīya Sampradaya

In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it has been revealed that *kṛṣṇa-prema* is the supreme goal of all *jīvas*, and that *rādhā-prema* is the supermost *prema*. Kṛṣṇa, as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, came only to taste that *prema*, and to give the moods of Rūpa-mañjarī, Rati-mañjarī and all *palya-dāsīs* of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. The *jīva* cannot possess the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. He cannot digest more than the mood of *palya-dāsī*, but that mood is the highest position. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and all the Gosvāmīs were absorbed in this internal mood of a servant of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

It is this *prema*, *bhakti-rasa*, which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave through Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. The *śloka*, *śrī-caitanya-mano-'bhistam*, composed by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, was especially written to glorify Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Because he is Rūpa-mañjarī, he can understand the Lord's innermost desires, and give to the *jīvas* his own intimate service to Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu requested all His associates to give special mercy to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, so that he could realize His heart's inner desire and distribute it to the entire world. They all gave their mercy and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was thus empowered to compose literatures expressing Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's inner moods. In this way Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī pleased the Lord. No one before him had composed books like his. Śrīman Mahāprabhu gave a special order to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī—to write books about what He had previously taught him at Prayāga, and establish *rāgānugā-bhakti*, spontaneous devotional service, in the world. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī thus fulfilled the Lord's order in his various books, such as *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Ujjvala-nilamani*. He presented *tattvas*, truths, which were not vividly explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *Puranas*, or anywhere else. In *Vidagdha-madhava*, *Lalita-madhava* and other books, he wrote many *ślokas* describing the moods of Śrīmatī Rādhikā and the *gopīs* called *vraja-bhāva*.

The Real Purpose of the Rūpānuga Ācāryas

As described in the *Śrī Sad-gosvamy-astaka*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, conveying only the moods which the Lord wanted him to preach. All our disciplic line are *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇavas. They have preached about Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's descending to distribute that *prema*, that *vraja-bhakti*, *vraja-rasa*. All the *ācāryas* in the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* have not come to establish *vaidhi-bhakti*, beginning from Madhavendra Puripada and down to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja. They did so, however, in order to first cut the jungles of philosophical misconceptions, then to establish the *yuga-dharma*, and then to give these deeper conceptions. Without this preliminary work, no one can understand their inner moods and real purpose.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja has also come to give this supreme conception to the world. He did not come just to give *harināma* or establish *vaidhi-bhakti*. He has given us these principles to prepare us for further progress. He has cut down the jungles of *mayavada*, *sahajiyism* and *sakhī-bekhivada* (those who, although full of material desires, dress themselves as *sakhīs* of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa) and all other spiritual misconceptions. Wherever he went, he purified hearts, yet his *mula*, his root objective, was to give this supreme *prema*.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja has come to give these elevated principles through the holy name. For less qualified persons he also gave *vaidhi-bhakti* through the name, but his innermost mood was to give this *kṛṣṇa-prema*. As I explained in Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja was not in the line of Advaita Ācārya , Mahāviṣṇu, who comes in each Kali-yuga to establish the *yuga-dharma* of the general *nāma* (which only awards the chanter *vaikuṇṭha-prema*). As Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu He established *nāma* with *vraja-prema*. As this was His speciality it was also the speciality of Swāmījī. So I have glorified Swāmījī. I've established that he has come in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī to give this *prema*, and just as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu did, he has also established *yuga-dharma*. Swāmījī was a *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava, a follower of Rūpa Gosvāmī, Rūpa-mañjarī.

Your Prabhupāda is the Parikara of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

I want to tell ISKCON leaders and the whole world that your Prabhupāda has come from Caitanya Mahāprabhu and he has come to give the same thing that Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted to give. But they don't want to move an inch and they abuse me and say, "What are you saying? We can't allow you to say this, that he is part and parcel and *parikara* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu *rāsarāja-mahabhāva*!" Perhaps they have no mind to think of all these things. So some of them are against me. Swāmījī has first cleared the atmosphere and prepared the ground by preaching the name and the *sandesa* of *Gītā* everywhere. It is so important! Without this he couldn't have given this other thing. Caitanya Mahāprabhu first preached in the whole world Kṛṣṇa's name and He made Vaiṣṇavas so that all would understand His inner mood. Otherwise no one can understand. So your Prabhupāda has done this task and it was necessary for that purpose for the whole world.

But he has not done everything by doing this thing. It was only the basement, foundation. Afterwards he began to erect the temple. How? By writing his books. In no time, a very short time, he completed *Bhagavad-Gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. The best works are there *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. I think that if he had been alive for one or two years more he would have completed *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Ujjvala-nilamani*, *Vidagdha-madhava*, *Jaiva Dharma* and all the other books which are important for being able to know Caitanya Mahāprabhu, *rasa* and *rasika* and *rasika-sekhara*.

We should understand that backing Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja is his *guru-varga*, the disciplic succession—Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, Śrīla Svarupa Damodara, Śrīla Raya Ramānanda and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Acting as their hands, their instrument, Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja did not come here to give his own independent mission. He came to spread the mission of his beloved Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Gaura-Nityānanda, and particularly the mission of Śrīla Svarupa Damodara, Śrīla Raya Ramānanda and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

It is important for us to try to read *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Nectar of Instruction* again and become more familiar with this information. It is not that devotees should not understand these explanations. All respectable Vaiṣṇavas must know them. They are not meant to simply collect money and make plans. Everyone must do some service according to his tendency, but all dignified devotees should also carefully understand Swāmījī's purpose for coming to this world.

You should try to obey all of Swāmījī's principles and try to have the same internal mood and objective as he. That objective is *vraja-prema, gopī-prema*. This is our goal. You should begin from the very preliminary stages, and progress gradually to *anyabhilasita-sunyam*, ultimately giving up all material desires to please Kṛṣṇa. I offer my *dandavata-pranāmas* to His Divine Grace Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja.

Under the Guidance of a Qualified Guru

It is better to live in Vṛndāvana, where Kṛṣṇa's pastimes were performed. And if you cannot live there, then be there by mind. But that alone is not sufficient, for Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī gives still another rule. We will have to be under the guidance of a *rasika tattva-jna* Vaiṣṇava, that is, under the guidance of a fully-realized soul who has complete knowledge of *śāstra* and who is experiencing his loving relationship (*rasa*) with Kṛṣṇa—like Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and his *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava followers. Otherwise, it is not possible to advance on this path.

It is clear that Swāmījī is a follower of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. To have such a fully qualified *guru* is very rare, very rare. If, in this life, due to some spiritual piety (*sukrti*) we have accepted even a *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī-guru*, some impressions of Vaisnavism are made on the heart. Then we may have the qualification to choose a bona fide *guru*. And how do we choose? We surrender ourselves at the lotus feet of the *caitya-guru* (Kṛṣṇa in the heart) and pray to Him. Residing in our heart, He will hear our plea. He will always hear. If one prays, "O Kṛṣṇa, I sincerely desire to become your servant. Please direct me to the lotus feet of a qualified *guru*," Kṛṣṇa will surely arrange this. One who neglects such prayer, and has confidence in his own ability to select and examine his *guru*, will be disturbed in his spiritual life.

One symptom of a bona fide *śikṣā* or *dīkṣā-guru* is that each of his disciples feels such affection coming from the *guru* that he thinks his *guru* loves him the most. When coming into the *guru's* presence, all Vaiṣṇavas, even those who are not disciples, feel that the *guru* loves them the most. I have seen this quality in my Guru Mahārāja and also in Swāmījī. I think that so many disciples of Swāmījī have also experienced this. We have heard from the disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda that everyone, from small children to superiors, used to think, "I am loved so much by my Guru Mahārāja." The disciples experience this symp-

tom of a bona fide *guru* because he does not desire material profit from them. He only wants to reside in their hearts and inject them with *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Unless he is perfect in his own realization of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, he cannot give it. The *guru* never takes the heart of the disciple as his own property. Rather he makes it soft, sweet and fragrant, suitable to be offered to the Divine Couple. The disciple first offers his heart unto the lotus feet of his beloved *guru*, who will in turn give it to his *guru*, and so on, until it is placed at the lotus feet of Rūpa-mañjarī. She will give it to Lalita and Visakha who will offer it at the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Śrīmatī Rādhikā will then engage that person in service to Kṛṣṇa and Herself.

The *guru* instructs us how to practice *bhakti*, and how to develop our honour, affection and service for Kṛṣṇa. This is *divya-jñāna*. *Guru* also destroys our sinful reactions: *divyam jñānam yato dadyat, kuryat papasya sanksayam, tasmad dikseti sa prokta, desikais tattva-kovidaih*. "By *dīkṣā* one gradually becomes disinterested in material enjoyment and gradually becomes interested in spiritual life." [*Bhakti-sandarbha* 283] *Kuryat papasya sanksayam*. Material life means the problems arising from attachment to worldly affairs. In material life one is full of lust, anger, greed, madness, illusion and envy, thinking himself to be the enjoyer. Śrī Gurudeva destroys the four stages of sin—*prārabdha*, *kuṭa bīja*, *aprārabdha* and *avidyā*.

If our *dīkṣā-guru* is not of such a calibre that he is capable of doing all these things, then his disciples should accept a *śikṣā-guru* who is more advanced. Pray to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gurudeva to help you solve your difficulties. A bona fide *guru* will advise you to seek shelter of advanced Vaiṣṇavas who are of the calibre of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura. He will not complain that his disciple is taking shelter of a superior Vaiṣṇava. A *sad-guru* (self-realized *guru*) never desires worldly gain. If he does, he is not actually *guru*. If the *guru* is showing jealousy or envy that his disciples are associating with a *śikṣā-guru*, or if he is opposed to Vaiṣṇavas and their teachings, then the disciple should consider giving him up.

Be Bold and Associate with Qualified Vaiṣṇavas

If you follow this instruction to associate with pure devotees Kṛṣṇa will manage everything for you. Don't fear. Kṛṣṇa has created you. He is the Supreme Controller, so why should you have any fear? All problems will be solved by following this instruction and Kṛṣṇa will manage everything. If you want unalloyed service to Kṛṣṇa, have courage in your heart, be bold and make an effort to associate with qualified Vaiṣṇavas. Its importance is stressed not only once, but three times: *sādhu-sanga*, again *sādhu-sanga*, again *sādhu-sanga*.

If you want unalloyed devotional service to Kṛṣṇa you should boldly follow the directions and instructions which we have mentioned. If your preference is for making money, and you see that this will be hampered by associating with high-class Vaiṣṇavas, then you will not be inclined to follow these instructions. If you aspire to be like Prahlada Mahārāja, then you should associate with the statements in Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja's purports.

Mark these words of Swāmījī's in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Adi-lila* [1.35]. If you want unalloyed devotional service, you must associate with Vaiṣṇavas. Otherwise you will get *asat-sanga* (association with materialists). This will be the result. So try to follow Swāmījī's line of thought. I am following the same line as Swāmījī. A person who says that I am not in the same line as Swāmījī is himself not in that line. I will never speak anything different from that which was spoken by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Swāmījī.

Give Proper Honour to All Vaiṣṇavas

My humble request to everyone is to honour all senior Vaiṣṇavas, senior in years spent with Gurudeva as well as senior in *bhakti*. We cannot realize who is senior or junior in *bhakti* unless we ourselves are advanced. Sometimes we may be able to, but generally we are only qualified to consider who is senior or junior in years with Gurudeva. This is good, but the consideration on the basis of *bhakti* is superior.

jena vaiṣṇava ciniya laiya adhara karibe jabe
vaisnavera krpa tahera sarva siddhi avasya payibe tabe

Those who are qualified to realize who is *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*, who is *madhyama-adhikārī* and who is *uttama-adhikārī* are themselves surely above *madhyama-madhyama-adhikārī*. Similarly, it is to our benefit to also try and give respect according to this standard considering the stages of one's real advancement in devotion. It is not correct to honour everyone in the exact same way. Rather, we should consider whether one is *kaniṣṭha, madhyama* or *uttama-adhikārī* and honour accordingly. Our *bhakti* will then greatly develop and our lives will be successful.

If we have no taste for *harināma* and if we want to achieve that taste we will have to regularly practice these principles in *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* of appropriately honouring devotees. One who makes an external show of being a Vaiṣṇava but who fails to honour the Vaiṣṇavas, giving preference to worldly fame and gain, should be given up without delay, even though you may have taken both *harināma* and *dīkṣā* from that person. Such a *guru* is a so-called *guru* and should be given up. This has been explained in the *Mahabharata* and other scriptures. If you do not reject such a *guru*, you will have to go to hell. Be ready for that. No Vaiṣṇava should be dishonoured, even a *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*, and what to speak of a *madhyama* and *uttama*. The association of one who is dishonouring or criticizing them should be given up. If he says that he is a bona fide Vaiṣṇava and that he is the only bona fide disciple of his Gurudeva, yet he commits this offense, then his own *guru*, if bona fide, will reject him.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī gives a very important instruction. We should not criticize anyone. We should not think that because there are quarrels in the transcendental world, such as those between the followers of Śrīmatī Candravali and the followers of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, that we may also quarrel. We should not take sides and criticize.

We should try to enter deeply into *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, taking initiation (*dīkṣā*) in a real way to have a permanent connection with Kṛṣṇa. We should also honour a person who has not yet received *dīkṣā* but is chanting Kṛṣṇa's name, for he is trying to be part of Kṛṣṇa's family. Even if he rebukes us, we should still honour him. We should only criticize our undeveloped, unconscious mind. The mind is so wicked. Each morning we should take a broom and beat the mind by saying, "O mind. Be pure and try to serve Kṛṣṇa."

Read the Books of Our Ācārya s and Become Qualified

For whom has Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja written all these books? He wanted his books distributed so that anyone desiring to understand them will approach a superior Vaiṣṇava by whose association he will try to become qualified. If Swāmījī had thought that no one was qualified, nor would there ever be anyone qualified to read and understand, then why did he write like this? Some say that no one in the world is qualified to realize these truths about Lord Caitanya. They say that one who tries to understand is a *sahajiya*. By using this logic, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja must also be *sahajiya* because these words of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* are theirs. Don't accept such logic.

Actually, any person reading *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the association of Vaiṣṇavas, and chanting Gaura-Nityānanda Prabhus' holy names, certainly becomes qualified.

We are all recipients of Mahāprabhu's mercy because we have given up all other lines to take shelter in His disciplic succession. The number of interested devotees in the world is so small that they can be counted on one's fingers. I think those who have taken shelter at the lotus feet of Caitanya Mahāprabhu or His associates will certainly one day be qualified. Don't feel hopeless. I see rays of hope everywhere. Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mercy will be among you.

Many devotees have *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and throughout *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* we have Swāmījī's purports. But still we rarely have the opportunity to hear clear explanations of his words. If we ourselves cannot properly explain this, it means we have no real interest. To develop interest in this beautiful and powerful mission that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Swāmī Mahārāja have come to give, we must try to associate with Vaiṣṇavas who have a great interest in these topics, not in worldly topics. We have not come to this world with worldly possessions, and when we leave this body we will have to give up whatever we have accumulated. So why should we worry for material comforts and prosperity?

Those who do not read the books of our Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, like Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, will not be able to explain this vividly. Swāmījī was always reading all those books. If any disciples are only crying, "*Guru, guru, guru*," they will not understand this principle. If one thinks you should only know your own *guru*, and that by knowing Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, our Gurudeva Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja, Śrīla Visvanatha Cakravarti Ṭhākura, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, or Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī you cannot know Kṛṣṇa—this is offensive thinking.

Real and So-called Preaching

When Śrīla Prabhupāda visited Atlanta and the Deities of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitai during the hay-day of book distribution, a disciple asked, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, what will please you most?" Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "If you love Kṛṣṇa." In a letter to the Los Angeles book distributors in 1974 Śrīla Prabhupāda concluded, "It is very wonderful that you want to save the world, but first of all save yourself."

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī has come for the same purpose as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to give that *prema* which the Lord Himself came to give but I think that only very rare persons realize this. Swāmījī was cutting jungles of *mayavada* and other false philosophies, and devotees joined him in this; but we should not think, "Jungle cutting is the highest service in this world." We cut jungles in a particular place in order to construct a building or reside there. That construction is the construction of *bhakti*. We should not simply continue to cut jungles for *lakhs* and *lakhs* of births. There are certainly jungles everywhere, but it is useless to spend our lives cutting them. Here, Swāmījī is teaching the world: *bhakti vina jagatera nahi avasthana*. "Without such loving attachment, the existence of the material world is useless." Useless. So the cutting of jungles is also useless if one's mood is not to construct *bhakti* in the hearts of devotees. This is the main thing. We have not come to this world to make so many material constructions for our comfort. Our Gosvāmīs and *ācāryas* are very powerful and have also cut jungles. But we are not so powerful. If we concentrate only on trying to cut the jungles of *sahajiyas*, *māyāvādīs* and *visayis* (sense enjoyers), even in the name of 'making devotees', we will be affected by those same contaminations.

Nowadays people think preaching is easy, and distributing is more important than practising. But if one does not know the *śāstra*, or the ABCs of preaching, then what is he doing? One may collect money by distributing books, keep some for himself and give some to the *maṭha* (temple). Although he thinks, "I am a very good preacher," or "We are preaching to the whole world," all he may be doing is arranging to take *maha-prasadam* and live in the *maṭha*. His preaching is so-called only. If one is not actually practising, then after a few days, months or years, he again takes to bad habits; and when found guilty of this, he is driven from the temple, or he himself leaves *bhakti* altogether.

Preaching successfully is not cheap. If you are following the process and are having some realization, then try to give it to others. The soul becomes very blissful by practising *bhakti-yoga* and Kṛṣṇa manifests in your heart. So, first you should be satisfied yourself by chanting and remembering, and when your faith is strong you can properly preach. *Yenatma samprasidati.* Otherwise you are cheating, and we see in this world that persons who cheat others are themselves cheated by Kṛṣṇa.

But you should also know that pure *vaidhi-bhakti* and impure *vaidhi-bhakti* are different. What we are doing is not *vaidhi-bhakti. Sravanam* and *kīrtanam*, etc., performed only to please Kṛṣṇa, is actually *vaidhi-bhakti.* If we are concentrating simply on money-making, we are not practising *bhakti.* A pure practitioner of *vaidhi-bhakti* is very rare. If we look in our heart, we may see that we are performing activities for our own gain and reputation. This is not pure *bhakti.* It is not even pure *vaidhi-bhakti.* We should try to follow *vaidhi-bhakti.* But Kṛṣṇa says here, "I am not even satisfied by real *vaidhi-bhakti.*" He is rejecting even that.

What is that pure *bhakti*? To serve Kṛṣṇa in *sakhya, vatsalya* and *madhurya-bhāva* as the Vraja-*vasis* do. To associate with someone who can teach us Kṛṣṇa's real moods is very rare even in Bhauma Vṛndāvana.

Practise *bhakti-yoga* yourselves, be bona fide and then try to preach; otherwise your words will have no potency and your preaching will be ineffective. You may speak about Kṛṣṇa the same way I do, or the same way Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī did, but whereas people listened to him, and they listen somewhat to me, they will not listen to one who is not practising pure *bhakti.*

Try to reform things as Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has told in his biography. After Caitanya Mahāprabhu and after the Gosvāmīs, some evil had entered into our Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya.* So you will have to reform all these things, then *bhakti,* like the pure Ganga, can flow. He tried, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī has also tried. Bhaktivedānta Swāmījī Mahārāja has given the seed and from that seed so many branches have come out and leaves have come out. Different fruits have also come out, but now we have to see that many unripened fruits are now ready to ripen. We have to control so that the ripened fruits will not be spoiled, no bad germs will enter and infect them. You should try to keep everything so pure as he was at that time, and you should preach everywhere all these things. Kṛṣṇa's name, *kṛṣṇa-prema.* What is *prema*? *Prema* is when anything coming against it will break, but *prema* will not break. Do you understand? Any opposite thing that will come to destroy *prema,* even if there is a good cause to hamper it, will go up. This is the symptom of *prema.* If *prema* is in our hearts, a very little drop, then our *prema* will increase. But sometimes we see that what appears to be *prema* goes away, so that is not *prema.* These things we want to preach.

One devotee from ISKCON was saying, "Prabhupāda has not said anything about these things. He has only told that you should preach." I said, "What should you preach? What is the meaning of preaching?" Then he became silent. You must know what Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to preach. At first you should know from ABC up to that point. You should obey the orders of Prabhupāda, but don't think, "We have known everything of Prabhupāda. We have heard everything from Prabhupāda and now we are going to preach." You should know ABCs, obey his general orders, chanting the name, and so on. But that is not the last goal of his *śikṣā.* One must understand this. I think he has come to give the same as what Rūpa Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Jīva Gosvāmī, Visvanatha Cakravarti Thākura and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura came to give. We should not try to bind him within our limited conception. We should pray to him that we can know. Always try to open your hearts and with love pray to him, "Mercifully you should reveal everything in our hearts." Then we can preach more and more.

Now Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda is in *aprakata-lila* and he is watching you and seeing whether you are completing his mission purely and with enthusiasm. This responsibility is great so you should do more and more labour for all of this. Any worldly thing, name and fame or any wealth or any of these things should not remove us far away from our goal of *prema.*

In our *sādhana* and *bhajana* no selfishness should enter in our endeavour. If any selfishness or any worldly things will come, they will keep us farther and farther away. So we should try to preach to the whole world all these methods of our Gosvāmīs, Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Rūpa Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī and our Gurudeva. This will be the best service.

We are All in One Family—The Gaura Parivara

In his last days in Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed that the policy of non-cooperation with the Gauḍīya Maṭha was changed and that we should cooperate. "The war is over." He formed the Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Charity Trust specifically to "bring unity amongst the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, especially the followers of His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura."

I'm very much obliged to you that you write to say, "It is clear to me that you are great powerful *ācārya* in the Vaiṣṇava world at present." Sometimes Śrīdhara Mahārāja also says like that. So, actually if you are feeling like that, let us work conjointly. There is great prospect for preaching Caitanya Mahāprabhu's message all over the world and in India also. At least in India we can preach very vigorously if we combine together. [SP letter 9.11.76]

There are many societies and associations of pure devotees, and if someone with just a little faith begins to associate with such societies, his advancement to pure devotional service is rapid. [Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Nectar of Devotion*, ch 19]

When I met Swāmījī in 1947, I think that most of you were not born at that time. There was no ISKCON, he had not established his society yet, but ISKCON was there. The real ISKCON is not a mortal thing, not to take birth and not to die—eternal thing. It has not taken birth at any time, no establishment, no death, no stopping, nothing. It is forever before Kṛṣṇa, in Satya-yuga, and it will be forever. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness is only pure love to Kṛṣṇa and Rādhikā. The mission and object of Caitanya Mahāprabhu was the same, and Jīva Gosvāmī called it Visva Vaiṣṇava Raja Sabha. The life and soul of this ISKCON, or the Visva Vaiṣṇava Raja Sabha, is to love and serve Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Conjugal or Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself. Taking the shape of Śrīmatī Rādhikā by Her beauty, Kṛṣṇa Himself came and He propagated this mission that we are part and parcel of God. If there is no love and affection for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then we are like a dead person. So the object and mission of Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the object and mission of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and the object and mission of Rūpa Gosvāmī is the object and mission of our all disciplic *ācāryas* up to Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja. So this love and affection for Conjugal is the life and soul of ISKCON and the whole of Vaisnavism. Swāmījī has not established any new thing. It is the same wine in a new bottle.

Although someone may say that there is a difference between Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja, it is not true. There is no difference. They are in the same disciplic line. Swāmījī preached in the West and my Gurudeva preached in India, yet they spoke the same message. Their love for Kṛṣṇa is the same. Their teachings are the same. Their service for Mahāprabhu is the same. One was in the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness and the other in the Gauḍīya Vedanta Samiti. But both are in the family of Caitanya Mahāprabhu (*gaura-parivara*), so there is no need for quarrel. One should never dishonour them. We should follow the instructions of the *ācāryas* and try to develop our Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

There is no enemy. There is no quarrel here. We are all Vaiṣṇavas. We are followers of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He spoke harshly in the past sometimes, but he admitted this. I became so much pleased to hear his words that we should not give so much importance to any institutional name. We should try to honour all Vaiṣṇavas who are in the line of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in the line of Rūpa Gosvāmī. It is one institution actually, consisting of Gauḍīya Vedanta Samiti, the International Society for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or any Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava. Each institution is

like a *gana* (group); just as there is Lalita-*gana*, Visakha-*gana*, like this. They are separate groups, but they only think how to serve Kṛṣṇa more and how the others also want to serve Kṛṣṇa more. For themselves there is no selfishness, nothing to quarrel about. So we should cooperate with each other, and then we will be able to preach to the whole world Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission, Kṛṣṇa's mission.

If there is a sprinkle of *prema* then we can be happy and we can treat each other like brothers, like friends, like Godbrothers, and *priti*, loving affection, will be there for each other, otherwise it can never be. Swāmījī has not made any sect or sectarian view. He has not made anything to quarrel with each other, envy anyone. He has taught us like other disciplic *ācāryas* have taught, that we are one family, and that family is called Gaura-family. This includes anyone who is loving and serving Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Nityānanda Prabhu, anyone who is chanting and remembering Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare. They are in this family, the Gaura-family; they should be honoured. They should be given respect and everything, like we are all the same family. Whether they are *kaniṣṭha*, whether they are *madhyama*, whether they are *uttama*, they should be given respect according to their stage. Whether anyone is a disciple of anyone, whether he may be of Swāmījī, your Prabhupāda, or he may be the disciples of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and others, anyone, or he may be the disciple of disciple of Swāmījī, no harm. We are all in one family, really I realize this thing here.

I am Sharing My Love for Him with You

All ISKCON leaders should please excuse me for any faults I may have done to their feet. I very humbly beg pardon to their feet. They should not be angry with me. I want to glorify Swāmījī more and more, but I'm unfortunate that they don't understand what I say. One day, if they are pure-hearted... sincere, fully sincere, serving your Prabhupāda, then one day it will come and they will be fortunate to understand these things. They want to bind Prabhupāda, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja, in their limited mentality. Their mentality is not yet out of *maya*. I'm not saying this about everyone. They want to confine Prabhupāda in their thoughts, they want to imprison him. But he's not to be imprisoned. They should think what we think Prabhupāda is, he is not only that, he's beyond these things, so much beyond. They only know how high the mountain is, but not how deep it goes. This they don't know. They should know how deep it is.

Although I explained all these things previously, some devotees could not understand. They told me, "Oh, you are not glorifying our Gurudeva." But he is my Gurudeva also, not only yours. I am sharing my love for him with you, to sprinkle more mercy on you. He has given me a special opportunity to serve him, and so I am offering my heartfelt *puspanjali* at his lotus feet here.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja Wanted Us to Advance in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura says in his prayers, "Without serving Kṛṣṇa I am so unfortunate, and in this life I have not served Him. I am always absorbed in useless worldly activities to collect possessions, but I am not happy. Although my material goals are like poison, I give up the nectar of *bhakti*, *kṛṣṇa-prema*, in pursuance of them. I should die. Why do I remain alive? Why am I maintaining my life?" We should also think like this. "If I am not serving and not doing proper *sādhana-bhajana*, then what is the use of this life? The human body is endowed with a greater capacity than animals for taking to spiritual life. Although I have higher intelligence and an opportunity for good association, I neglect it and take poison. So why should I not die? Lord Brahmā has made my heart harder than stone, and for this reason I do not die."

Before going to bed each night, we should consider our spiritual development. "Has my

faith increased today? Has my knowledge and service to Kṛṣṇa increased?" We do this in business when we close our shop or office in the evening, we calculate our gains and losses. Similarly, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda used to say that every night we should calculate if our *bhakti* has increased, if it is the same, or if it has decreased. Daily we should do this. If our association is good, it will increase; and if not, it will decrease. If we have taken *asat-sanga* (worldly association) then we will have a taste for sense enjoyment. If we have taken *sat-sanga* (good association) on the same level as ourselves and *visayi-sanga* (association of sense enjoyers) as well, then our service will be external and we will also have some taste for material enjoyment.

Suppose we have taken initiation twelve years or twenty-four years ago. Now we should calculate the growth of our service to Kṛṣṇa. Is our *sādhana-bhajana* the same as when we first joined? Has it diminished, or has it developed? If we sincerely consider such points, we can progress quite easily. If we have not made much progress from the time of joining the mission, if we have a taste for *visaya,* and if we are simultaneously taking *asat-sanga* along with *sat-sanga*, this is due to some offence. We should know then that our *bhakti* is decreasing.

I think you can understand this. When you first came to your Gurudeva you were so enthusiastic. Similarly, with good association you will maintain your enthusiasm. If you do not have enthusiasm, it is due to bad association, offences and *anarthas.* An attempt should be made to correct the situation. A boy cannot remain in the same class for twenty years. If he does so, it means that he is not really in class. He is not studying, but rather playing soccer, cricket, and so on, and taking bad association. He has not actually been in school. We should calculate our progress, otherwise we cannot improve.

By always serving *suddha-guru, suddha-vaiṣṇavas, suddha-nāma,* and engaging in devotional practices, in a short time you will be a pure devotee. You should not give time for *anarthas* and *aparadhas.* In other words, you must be so engaged that you do not have time to dwell on past *anarthas* and *aparadhas,* nor do you have time to commit new ones. With a mood of service to Śrī Guru, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Vaiṣṇavas, and an understanding that this name is Kṛṣṇa Himself, one should serve them by chanting day and night. If we serve and hear from those who are chanting *suddha-nāma,* our chanting of *nāmaparadha* and *nāmabhasa* will go away and the pure name will come.

My Siksa-Guru and Priya-Bandhu



Our first meeting was during a lecture given by my Gurudeva. A *grhastha* devotee was at the back door and Gurudeva, upon seeing him, asked me to bring him forward. It was a large assembly. That devotee hesitated to come forward but Gurudeva insisted that he come all the way to the front. My Gurudeva gave so much respect to him, and he had him sit by him on the platform. I looked up at my Guru Mahārāja, silently questioning, 'who is this?'. Afterwards he told me, "This is Abhaya Carana Babu. He is a very dear disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda. You should note him, you should hear from him, and you should serve him."

My Siksa-Guru and Priya-Bandhu

In this section Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja remembers his early years of association with Śrīla Prabhupāda before he went to the West, and his final days with Him in Vṛndāvana before His entrance into *nitya-līlā*.

"I began to serve him, in my heart and everything"

Memories of First Meetings

Swāmī Mahārāja was a very bosom friend to my Gurudeva. At that time he was a *grhastha*, very beautiful. In 1940, after the departure of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, when the Gauḍīya Maṭha split up, one party wanted to arrest senior Vaiṣṇavas and cases were filed. So our Gurudeva visited Swāmījī in his family's home in Allahabad. He stayed there with him for four months. They became nearer and dearer to each other. They always discussed *Bhagavad-Gītā* and all other subjects concerning *guru-seva*. My Gurudeva used to speak to me about his Godbrother, Abhaya Carana Babu. He always told me how dear he was to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī from the very beginning. He told me how his Gurudeva had wanted Swāmījī to write articles for the Harmonist. Already I had heard so much about him, what a good friend he was to my Gurudeva, and what a good writer and sincere and qualified devotee he was. I had not seen him yet, but seeing by ears is even more strong than seeing by eyes.



I was in Calcutta as the personal servant to my Gurudeva in 1947. It was the inauguration of a new branch of the Gauḍīya Vedanta Samiti on Ghosh Para Lane. Many Vaiṣṇavas were present like Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrīla Jajavara Mahārāja, Śrīla Puri Mahārāja and Śrīla Tirtha Mahārāja. So many people came to see my Gurudeva, to meet with him. To solve different things, material or spiritual, they would come to my Guru Mahārāja.



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At that time I used to cook for all the Vaiṣṇavas, breakfast, lunch, everything. Swāmījī used to watch me and he became impressed with me. He was so happy to see my service to my Gurudeva. He asked me some questions about myself, where I was from, where I had joined, and he became very pleased with my replies. I also was so much impressed and attracted to him. As he stated in his letters, from the first time he saw me there was affection between us. From this time I began to serve him, in my heart and everything.

At that time, in 1953, our magazines, *Gauḍīya Patrika* and *Bhāgavata Patrika*, were started. Our Gurudeva requested Swāmī Mahārāja, "I want to establish a publication in Bengali and other languages. I especially want you to write articles for that." Earlier he had written articles for the Harmonist and now he continued to write so many wonderful essays, *Gītā* purports and all. He wrote so marvelously that everyone was praising him. He challenged all that was opposite to pure *bhakti*; especially the 'Murgi Mission'. He called Ramakṛṣṇa this because they took chicken. Our Guru Mahārāja requested him to write more articles like these, to reform religious *samskaras* and institutions.



Śrīla Vamana Mahārāja appointed Swāmī Mahārāja to be the top of the editors, the *sa nghapati Sanghapati* means head of the editorial department. Editor-in-chief. I was also in the editorial *sanga* for the Hindi *Bhāgavata Patrika*. He used to submit his articles in Bengali and sometimes in Hindi. He usually wrote in Bengali. His Hindi I would have to correct and then submit because his home language was not Hindi. I would correct or translate from his writings. At last he learned to write Hindi, but what he gave to our *Gauḍīya Patrika* in Bengali, I translated into Hindi and then we would print it in *Bhāgavata Patrika*. Swāmī Mahārāja continued writing for our magazines for many years. Some of those original editions we have preserved still today at our *maṭha*.



"You please live here forever"

__*Associating Together in Mathura*__

My Guru Mahārāja and I were here when Śrīla Prabhupāda, or Abhaya Carana Prabhu as he was known at that time, arrived at Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathura. I embraced him and he also embraced me. I told him, "Prabhu, I will not let you go anywhere else. Please stay here reading *Bhagavad-Gītā* and so on. I know that there are none to look after you. I will look after you. You please live here forever. I never want you to leave." He became so glad. I gave him a room adjacent to my room. There were only two rooms, mine and his. At that time there was no *mandira* in our *maṭha*. He was impoverished then. He had nothing to show, that "This is mine." He had only his body and *atma*. He had no *paisa*, nothing, only some copies of *Back to Godhead*, *Gītā*, and three or four volumes of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. These are now preserved in our library. He only had these things. No bedding, no boxes, nothing. He became so pleased and Guru Mahārāja also became so pleased when he came to stay with us.



We used to joke together. From my boyhood I would joke with everyone. He was like a friend, no *aisvarya*. He was so much older than me. In age and in every way he was equal to my Gurudeva. He was a very respected person, an educated person. I was not educated and am still not educated, having no qualities. I still don't know why he used to love me and give me so much mercy. I find nothing in myself. Even today I see so many beautiful persons with such good memories and every kind of virtue and quality, so why they like me?, I don't know. But in this way he used to honor.

I would joke with him saying, "You may want to love your children and your wife, but they don't want." One of his sons was against him and one was somewhat helpful, but he didn't want to serve him. So I would say, "Why you are not taking service from all of us? You should not go back. I will beg from door to door and I will arrange to get you bread and everything."

We would joke together about so many things. As I joke now. He was very fond of joking. When he used to laugh it was very sweet. He joked in a special way, with a slight smile. Playful. His lips were pursed just a little, not wide.



He would often come into my room. We had many discussions. We used to talk about *Prahlada-caritra* and 10th Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. We read many of those books together. He would deeply discuss the matters he wrote about in the *Gauḍīya Patrika*. Sometimes with one, two, three, or five disciples of my Gurudeva. Also there were some big officers and other important gentlemen who used to come to hear him speak. They would say, "Oh, Swāmījī is such a learned person." Everybody would glorify him.

He read the *Bhāgavatam*, word by word, as he has given explanation in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. In our talks I was not just accepting everything. I raised questions and questions, even to my Gurudeva. What they told me I accepted, but with logic as *śāstra-pramana*, not blindly. With him it was like this also. I raised so many questions. Other disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda sometimes could not answer me. They told me, "Go to your Gurudeva and he will satisfy you and quench your thirst. Others cannot do." In that mood

I always wanted to go in deep, so deep. I cannot accept anything without raising so many questions. I used to hear everything very patiently but not accept anything blindly. Swāmījī was also like this. Our Guru Mahārāja and he were very logical men. By logic they used to strongly explain all these things.

At *sundara-arati* time in the evenings, we would lead *arati* together. He would always play the *mrdanga* so expertly and I would play the *karatalas* and sing. He liked my singing very much and he would always request me to sing. Someone asked me, "Why didn't Swāmījī also sing, because he had a beautiful voice as well." I replied, "There were times he didn't sing because he was weeping too much." Just like on his cassettes, I have heard, *gauranga bolite habe, vande rupa sanatanau.* In manv *kīrtanas* he was weeping, he was feeling so much and he was weeping.

"You have to do so many more important things"

Accepting Sannyasa

This happened in 1959. We would talk together and he would tell me, "When Prabhupāda gave me initiation I read a *śloka* in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, yasyaham anugrnami harisye tad dhanāma sanaih...* Kṛṣṇa takes away everything from one who takes His shelter and receives His mercy; Kṛṣṇa takes away all of his wealth, everything, and makes him a street beggar. Then he will have to weep, weep and weep, again and again.' The time I heard this, I feared becoming a beggar. I never stopped my chanting, remembering, and doing devotional services. That is why I had lost my job at Bengal Chemicals. Although I feared, all that I did to gain wealth failed."

He had been the manager of Bengal Chemicals and he was so expert that he arranged another company himself, but that also failed. He came to Allahabad and he managed a very big shop where Indira Gandhi and Jawarhalal Nehru used to come. But after some time that also failed. He did a little more business, but they all failed. Then he came here. We used to sit side by side and he said, "That which I feared has come on my head, and now I see that I cannot successfully do these things." I replied,"You should not do this any more. You are not a person to do anything associated with this world. You have to do so many more important things. Kṛṣṇa and your Gurudeva want you to do many things. You are so qualified to preach in the Western countries."



Later, when my Gurudeva arrived from Navadvīpa, I told him, "Abhaya Babu is your friend. He can obey you because you are elder." Guru Mahārāja was a *sannyāsī* and Swāmījī was in *grhastha-vesa*. I requested my Gurudeva to apply some pressure so that he would take *sannyāsa*. Then Gurudeva called him and said, "Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and all the other boys are saying that you should take *sannyāsa*. I also support this idea. You should take *sannyāsa*. It will be very beneficial."



He agreed to accept *sannyāsa*, and we arranged for the very next day. That day was the auspicious Visvarupa Mahotsava. Swāmījī asked, "How should I prepare?" I told him, "Don't worry, I will do everything." So I prepared *bahir-vasa* and *uttariya* and a *danda* with my own hands. I taught him how to wear all these things. The fire *yajna* was done here. Our Guru Mahārāja came and Akincana Kṛṣṇadāsa Babaji Mahārāja came also. Sesasayi Brahmācari, Kunjabihari Brahmācari, and so many other persons were there. Now so many of these devotees have departed. Also Sanātana Prabhu took *sannyāsa* with Swāmījī and he became Bhaktivedānta Muni Mahārāja. He was ninety years old and had said to Swāmījī, "If you agree to take *sannyāsa*, then so shall I." He also is no longer here, having joined the service of Kṛṣṇa.

I was reciting the *yajna mantras.* Akincana Kṛṣṇadāsa Babaji Mahārāja began to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛsna Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare. Swāmījī requested that *kṛṣṇa-nāma* be sung continuously, the *kīrtana* of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *maha-mantra*. Guru Mahārāja then gave him the *sannyāsa-mantra*.



Some don't think *sannyāsa* to be very valuable or so much important; but it is so important. I think that if he had not taken *sannyāsa* perhaps he could not have done what he did in the Western countries. Swāmī Mahārāja himself has said this in *his Nectar of Instruction.* In India everyone has so much honour for *sannyāsīs.* In *sannyāsa* one gives up something but gains everything. As explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, mukunda-seva-vrata.* A *sannyāsī* thinks, "I only love Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. I don't know anything else." The *sannyāsa-mantra* is very helpful in the *bhajana* of *gopī-bhāva* that Rūpa Gosvāmī, Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and all the other Gosvāmīs have tried to give us. I think that *gopī-bhāva* is superior to all supermost things. To give *śraddha,* to give *harināma,* to give *Brahmā-gayatri* and to give *gopī-bhāva,* which do you think is most important? I think all are subordinate to *gopī-bhāva.* It is *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa.* Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to give this. It is very important. Don't think it is a minor point. So Guru Mahārāja gave him *gopī-bhāva-mantra* and *sannyāsa.*

"Always like a bosom friend"

Days of Intimacy at Rādhā *Damodara Mandira*

We were Godbrothers first in *sannyāsa* relations. He was *sannyāsa* disciple of his Godbrother, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja. I had taken *sannyāsa* before him in 1954 and he took *sannyāsa* in 1959. However, I always treated him and behaved towards him like my *śikṣā-guru.* But Swāmījī never treated me like a disciple. Always like a bosom friend, sitting on the same seat, chanting, remembering, doing *kīrtana,* sometimes making chapatis. He used to roll chapatis and I would put them on the fire and then we offered them. We would be sitting on the same bed together. I gave him my chadar, because he had no chadar to put there. Only one torn quilt was there. I was fortunate to serve him like this at the Rādhā-Damodara Temple.



At Rādhā-Damodara he was mostly writing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other articles, so many things. When I visited, I would assist him. I was also editor of the *Bhāgavata Patrika,* so I had very little time. I used to go there but not to go everywhere here and there with him. We would take *prasadam* with the Rādhā-Damodara *gosvāmī.* Sometimes we would do Rādhā-Damodara *parikrama* together—to the *samadhis* of Jīva Gosvāmī, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī and especially Rūpa Gosvāmī.



From the beginning he had strong *sankalpata,* determination, to go to the West. He had kept that idea already for a long time. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, as well as my Guru Mahārāja, had told him to preach there. Even before he took *sannyāsa* he was determined to go to the Western countries and preach. That is why he was translating the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and other books into English. With great determination he did all this writing just for that. He was not in any dilemma about what to do. But when he was residing at Rādhā-Damodara Temple in his little *kutira,* he had no money, he was penniless. So he was thinking and worrying how to go there. He was praying to Rādhā-Damodara that They should bring him to the West.



"Then I took his footdust and put it on my head"

Preparation and Departure for America

Swāmī Mahārāja was in Delhi for some time before he left to go to America. He had published three volumes of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.* At the time when he was printing and distributing his books, he stayed there. Several times I went there to be with him then. We stayed together

in his room at Chippinwada Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Temple. He wanted to preach also there in Delhi. Later, when he was in America and when he returned, he sent me there to preach.



When Swāmījī left to go to the West, he told me everything about his travelling plans. He told me he had been given a ticket in Bombay to travel by freighter. He asked me to go with him. I begged him that I could not go without the permission of my Gurudeva who had ordered me to manage the *maṭha* in Mathura. He told me,"I am going now." Then I came and took his footdust and put it on my head. So many times, even before he left, he requested me to write to him and to send him his books. He came and said goodbye.

"He kept it as a seed within him, otherwise he could not preach"

The Last Days in Vrndavana

Swāmījī was leaving his body. He was surely in *madhurya-rasa*. Why not *sakhya-rasa*, as others may say? I have not denied this, because in *madhurya-rasa* everything is there. In *madhurya-rasa*, all other *rasas*, *vatsalya-rasa*, *sakhya-rasa*, everything is included there. So it may be that all were in him. He was never deprived of *sakhya-rasa*. But Swāmījī was certainly in *madhurya-rasa*, because his *sannyāsa-guru*, my Gurudeva, gave him the *gopī-bhāva-mantra*. He was surely in *madhurya-rasa*, because like Rūpa Gosvāmī, Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, like in the purports of all of his books, he was surely in *madhurya-rasa*.



Can you see his *prema*? Have you realized? He was in that mood, but he did not excercise it. He has kept it as a seed within him. Otherwise, he could not preach. So for this purpose, he had to subdue all these actual moods. It was going on inside if *uddhipana* (stimulus) was there. When he went to the West there was *uddhipana* for preaching. "This material body is not myself, *Gītā*, Jagannātha, and all." He came to Vṛndāvana to experience all these things, hearing and always chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa. That mood of his—some could see and others might not have realized. He has told us, "My home is in Vṛndāvana." Home means his loving home, real home. In Vṛndāvana he has realized. So when he realized he became silent and wasn't speaking anything. His *prema* was going on inside, but it was not manifested. Otherwise all would be madness and the preaching would be stopped. For a *rasika-bhakta*, he will experience his *vastu-siddhi* body. Sometimes it is manifested in this body. Sometimes it comes like this, but in the same way like Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He checked these things when *vijatiya* (unqualified people) came.

"Tears were coming from his eyes so sweetly. He was acting like he was not a good Vaiṣṇava"

The Final Meeting: November 13th, 1977

When I arrived, he was quite silent and there were some boys there singing Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, and some *sannyāsīs*, and all others were keeping silent. At once he opened his eyes, and he did like this (indicating with his eyes for me to come). He was so enthusiastic before his death, not his death, no, his entering into *kṛṣṇa-lila*. He was not speaking, but when he saw me then he was so happy.

At that time he was so sick. He had told his senior *sannyāsīs* and so many others there, "I just want to meet Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja." So they came and requested, "Śrīla Prabhupāda wants you, so please come." I came at once, immediately. They were very softly, with little sound, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in Prabhupāda's tune. All could see that Śrīla Prabhupāda was not speaking anything now. No talk. I did *pranāmas* to him, *santya-pranāmas*, because I saw that there were so many persons there and no space for me to do full *pranāmas*. Then he saw me and at once he said, "Oh, Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja has come." He wanted me to sit down but I went to him. He tried to sit

up but I put my hands there and said, "Please lie down on your bed and I will sit here." He at once ordered, not ordered but he prayed that I come to his bed, very much nearer and said, "I want to speak to you." I came by his bed and he wanted me to sit nearer by his ear. Quickly he told them, "Oh, bring a chair." Then I took a chair and sat on it nearer to his ear.

First he began to weep. He was melted. From the core of his heart he told me, "Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, can you excuse me? I feel that there is cause." I told him, "You are my *śikṣā-guru* and a pure Vaiṣṇava. I know that you cannot do anything which is not in the way of *bhakti*. So I know that you have not done anything that I should excuse." He said, "For the sake of preaching I have spoken so many things that may not have been right. Also in one of my letters you will see that I have replied to it so strongly, the reply to that letter someone has told to all. I told my disciples things I should not have done, 'We are doing *prachar* and they [my Godbrothers] are not; they are *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* and not doing preaching.' Actually I should not have done that. For preaching I have done this, to try to make them [my disciples] one-pointed and qualified. Tell the others that I have done this offence and to please excuse me. I have so much sorrow for this." So Swāmījī remembered these things.



Sometimes the Indian disciples in the line of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda wanted that none of them accept the name Prabhupāda. They felt that they should reserve this honour only for Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Some of those Prabhupāda disciples were somewhat offended and they spoke like this. So Swāmījī explained, "I have not done this, but my disciples have done. Is it wrong?"



There were also some strong things that he had told, that "All the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are not helping me and they only take *maha-prasada* and sleep. They don't do preaching, not anything, so they are idle. To me he has told, "I am preaching in the whole world but they are not doing this or helping me." Now at this time he remembered all this. "I should not have said like this."



At that time so many of his *sannyāsī* disciples were around and as he spoke these things so many were watching. He said, "I should not have told all these things, but for the sake of preaching, some words came out." I replied, "We also do like this. So you were not wrong, I don't think that you have done anything wrong. You have done these things only for the preaching and for serving your Gurudeva. We are all indebted to you. There is no question. We know the prediction in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, prthivite yaca nagaradi gram*. It is a miracle. You have spread His glories everywhere. I think that you have not done anything wrong. So I have nothing to excuse you for. But I will tell your request to the senior Vaiṣṇavas and there will be peace." Tears were coming from his eyes, so sweetly. He was acting like he was not a good Vaiṣṇava. He was like Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.



He said, "Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda said that we should preach in Europe and America. That was his desire. And his other desire was that we all work together jointly to preach. I didn't waste a single moment. I tried my best, and it has been successful to some extent." His voice was choked with emotion. "If we can work conjointly, then as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, *sankīrtana* has great possibilities."



At that time he also told me, "As with babies I told them not to mix with others, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, my Godbrothers, the Prabhupāda disciples. Certainly there was some reason. There were some unqualified devotees amongst the Godbrothers who had done some wrong things. That is why, to save my young disciples from that influence is the reason why I have done so." I replied, "I think it was proper from my view, my opinion. For preaching, something can be told like this. I am thinking that you are my *śikṣā-guru*. Whatever instructions you give me, I will follow with absolute sincerity. There is nothing that you should excuse yourself for. On the other hand, you bless us. We need it. If anyone is offended by your actions, that is his fault. You should

be pacified."



After this he also told me, "I want that you should take care of all my disciples." In Bengali he told. "I want them to be good and qualified devotees. I want that you will help them all." There were so many disciples of Swāmījī there, so in Bengali he told, "I have caught in my net so many monkeys from the West. Really, they sometimes quarrel amongst themselves like that. They are still very young and untrained, so I request you, that after my departure you help them in every respect." I hesitated, considering this order from my *śikṣā-guru* and its implications. He held both of my hands in his own and looked at me deeply and asked me to promise to help. I told him, "I am promising that according to my ability and my Bhaktisiddhānta-*tattva* I will always be ready to help them as you request."



After this I again spoke, "But I want to say something else to them and that is..." Swāmī Mahārāja at once became inspired and told them, "Oh, you should all come." He called all the others, "Come near and hear Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja. You should take what he is telling into your hearts." Then I told them all, "Don't think that Swāmījī is leaving you here from this world, leaving his body. Gurudeva is eternal. He is a bona fide *guru* and Vaiṣṇava. You should try to preach his mission more and more enthusiastically. But if you are after material things, you will find yourselves quarrelling after name, fame and worldly gain. You will not be following the *śikṣā*, the teachings, of Swāmījī. You will not be following his mission. Then you'll be doing wrong. So don't pursue your *swartha*, your own self-interest. Give up all these things. And for the preaching of his mission and to serve Swāmījī, you should be united amongst all of the devotees. Don't make a very little point and quarrel with the others. Don't find any little fault and for that you should expel anyone from this mission. Try to behave like friends, with brotherhood, and then you can preach. If you have difficulty with any of these things then, as Swāmījī has told me, requested me, you can come to me and I will try to help from my heart, the core of my heart." They all listened to me. It was on cassette disk, but now they don't disclose all this.



At this time Swāmī Mahārāja turned his head slowly, looking over the devotees as they gathered in closely. Then he slowly lifted his hand, as if to call them to attention, and said, "Listen to Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja. Don't fight amongst yourselves. I have given direction in my books." Then he lowered his hand.



After this Swāmījī told me, "I pray to you that you will put me into my *samadhi* with your own hand. I don't want to take *samadhi* by anyone else's hands. I think you are the proper person. After my *samadhi* you can celebrate my separation festival, *viraha-mahotsava*. You should give some amount of money to all the seven temples in Vṛndāvana and to all the Gauḍīya Maṭhas. It depends upon you, $201, $1001, according to your discretion, what you recommend. They should all hear and arrange to pay. Do a *mahotsava* festival in Mathura and invite all the senior Vaiṣṇavas to the feast. And invite all the Vaiṣṇavas in Vṛndāvana. Do like this for me. And again I am telling you that you should always help my devotees."



"Swāmījī's desire was especially to go to Govardhana"

Govardhana is the Best Place in Vraja for both Sadhakas and Siddhas

When Kṛṣṇa goes to Govardhana with His friends, they drink water, eat fruits and take their cows out to graze. They roam in a carefree manner, and enjoy their pastimes. Girirāja provides *kuñjas*, caves, water, fruits and flowers for Kṛṣṇa's service. He is always ready to perform any service for Kṛṣṇa. The bushes and trees found within Govardhana's *kuñjas* are actually his hairs standing erect in ecstasy. What are the water and waterfalls of Govardhana? They are his tears of love when he cries in the ecstasy of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Everything of Govardhana is saturated with *kṛṣṇa-prema*. And when Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa perform Their pastimes there, even in the most

secluded place, Govardhana sees. Therefore Girirāja Govardhana receives the maximum mercy from Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Some devotees worship Govardhana in the form of Kṛṣṇa Himself, but in the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* we worship him as a great devotee, not as Bhagavān, because as a devotee, he can bestow the *prema-rasa* which is displayed there. If he is Bhagavān, then he cannot give that *prema* which Rādhikā and Her girl friends and even their devotees can give. Therefore devotees always aspire to go to Girirāja Govardhana, who has witnessed all of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

Devotees know that Girirāja Govardhana can bestow that *prema* which is relished by Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu descended to distribute and to taste Himself. Therefore Swāmījī, like Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, and my own worshipable Gurudeva, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, also wanted residence near Govardhana. Govardhana is the best place in Vraja for both *sadhakas* and *siddhas*. If a *sadhaka* who does not have *prema* does *bhajana* there, he will get *prema*, and if a perfected devotee goes there, he will relish Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *nitya-lila*. He will also receive *darsana* of the *mahabhāva* which is most dear to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and which he himself also aspires to attain. It cannot be attained anywhere else.



In his last days, Swāmījī expressed his real intention: "Govardhana, please give me residence near you." Swāmījī's desire was especially to go to Govardhana. In all of Vraja-*maṇḍala*, Gokula is the best because Gokula is where Kṛṣṇa was born from the womb of Yaśodā and where He performed His childhood pastimes. In Gokula there is a multitude of cows, *gopīs* and *gopas*. And the main *gopa* is Kṛṣṇa. He resides in Gokula, which includes Nandagrama, Varsana, Kamyavana and Vṛndāvana. In all of Gokula, Vṛndāvana is the best, and in Vṛndāvana, Govardhana is best. In all of Govardhana, the two eyes, Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa, are the best. The sweetest, most attractive pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa take place there. Swāmījī wanted to go to Govardhana because there the best of all of Their pastimes, the *rāsa-līlā*, takes place in a special way. So much attractive *kṛṣṇa-lila* is enacted at Girirāja Govardhana. I pray, "Hey Girirāja, please fulfill my desire to witness these pastimes."

Girirāja Govardhana is our primary shelter because prema-bhāva is the highest there

"Swamiji Came to Relish this Pinnacle of Prema, and to Distribute it to the Residents of this World"

Swāmī Mahārāja also wanted to go to Govardhana with the same idea in mind. His life's ideal and principal desire was to give this *prema* to the world, but first he had to spend a long time cutting away the jungle and preaching *vaidhi-bhakti*. He desired to translate the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in full and especially to elaborately describe the pastimes narrated in the Tenth Canto. But Bhagavān did not agree, and He called Him back to His *nitya-lila*. Perhaps Kṛṣṇa did not want him to remain in separation from Him any longer. Therefore Swāmījī's desire to go to Girirāja Govardhana was fulfilled by Bhagavān's calling him back to Girirāja Govardhana in Goloka Vṛndāvana. Girirāja Govardhana is our primary shelter because *prema-bhāva* is the highest there. Swāmījī came to relish this pinnacle of *kṛṣṇa-prema* and to distribute it to the residents of this world.

"He went there with his soul and everything, transcendental body"

"So his last wish was this. This is actually the glory of Swamiji."

Those who are most intelligent, they want to serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa Conjugal on the bank of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. They want to be there. If not by body, they want to live there in mind, by heart,

they are top-most. And those who are doing like this, always, they are like Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Rūpa Gosvāmī, Jīva Gosvāmī, Gopala Bhatta Gosvāmī, Raghunātha Bhatta, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, all living there. They have permanent seat there. Have you gone there? If you have gone there with any high-class devotee, we may sit there. Everything is there. There is also the Pāndavas and Draupadī. And they are doing *aradhana* of *gopīs* there. So they are all intelligent. And those who are actually, by transcendental body, always there under the guidance of Rūpa and Rati-mañjarī and all others, and serving Śrīmatī Rādhikā, sometimes serving Conjugal—they are most, most supreme. We want to follow them. Rūpa Gosvāmī wants to follow them. Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, all, and Swāmījī also.

I have heard from so many devotees of Swāmījī that in his last time, some days before, he wished, "Take me to Rādhā-kuṇḍa. I want to go there just now. I want to go to Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Bring a bullock cart. I don't want to go by car. By bullock cart I will go, like Nanda, Yasoda, like all Vraja-*vasis*, *gopīs*." He wished, I knew this fact. But he was controlled, he could not go. But no one can control him, I know. He went there with his soul and everything, transcendental body. He is always there, amongst Rūpa, Sanātana, Raghunātha in their *tadanuragi jananugami* [those pure Vaiṣṇavas who follow in the footsteps of the eternal Vraja-*vasis* who are *ragatmika* devotees]. Like *jananugami* he is there. So his last wish was this.

This is actually the glory of Swāmījī. If anyone is not perceiving this glory of his, then he is foolish, because he is not actually touching the glory of Swāmījī. They cannot glorify him. If someone wants to glorify him by discussing these qualities of his, his highest love and affection to Śrīmatī Rādhikā especially, they say, "Oh, he is a *sahajiya*, he has said this." They want to make all high classes of persons, *uttama-bhāgavatas* to also come down to *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*, because they have no idea. I know that Swāmījī wanted to be there forever and to serve—because he realized this poem of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (*Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*).

Appendix



Gurus of Different Levels And Taking Prabhupada Straight

Gurus of Different Levels

The following is an interview with Srila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja in which he clarifies certain points pertaining to guru-tattva. The questions asked to him were condensed from a series of questions presented by rtvik proponents. By his straightforward and penetrating answers he establishes that gurus are not all of the same level and their respective potencies will be determined according to certain symptoms which are evident to a discriminating disciple. He warns herein that a disciple who truly wishes to progress in his spiritual life must be very careful to avoid connection with a guru who has personal motives, and if this becomes discovered at some point by the disciple, then he must without delay give up his connection to such false guru and seek the connection of a truly qualified guru.

Q: How does a disciple relate with his *guru* in *aprakata-lila* (the guru's entrance into the eternal pastimes of Krsna in the spiritual world)? Like Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada's disciples, how can they relate with him since he is now in *aprakata-lila*?

Srila Narayana Maharaja: A disciple should think, "He is my Gurudeva, he is eternal, he is still here." When we pray for anything, he will inspire us. He is eternal, everywhere, in our hearts also. He has not left his body. His body, his everything, is transcendental. So don't worry. Our relationship with him is the same as it was.

Q: Is the example of Sri Madhvacarya approaching Srila Vyasadeva an example of this, that a disciple can, so to speak, summon a departed *acarya* who has entered into *aprakata-lila* and request initiation from him?

Srila Narayana Maharaja: Madhvacarya was a direct disciple of Vyasadeva. When Madhvacarya was living, about 4000 years had passed since Vyasa disappeared from this world. However, Madhvacarya knew that Vyasadeva was still alive and that he is eternal. So he prayed to him in Badrikasrama, beseeching him, "I want to take your *darsana* and to be initiated by you." And when he was praying, at once Vyasadeva personally came there, and Madhvacarya presented his wish to him that he should grant him initiation. And then after that Vyasa dissapeared.

So *guru* is like this. But those who do not understand the correct siddhanta, and are not very learned, and who have not developed their *bhakti* to the level of *madhyama-adhikari* or *uttama-adhikari*, cannot realize all these truths. And certainly a *kanistha-adhikari* is not able to realize all these things. So such persons being bewildered, may try to take help from the *rtvik* philosophy or some other ideology which is not our *siddhanta*. (editor's note: please refer to Bhagavata Parampara article included as previous chapter of this book.)

Q: Unless the *guru* is an *uttama-adhikari* can he give the *bhakti-lata-bija*? Can a *kanistha-guru* or *madhyama-guru* also give this?

Srila Narayana Maharaja: A *kanistha* cannot give. Never. Only a *madhyama-adhikari* can give it. A *madhyama-uttama-adhikari* is capable of giving the *bhakti-lata-bija*.

Q: Do you mean that such a guru is an *uttama-adhikari* who has come down to the level of *madhyama-adhikari*?

Srila Narayana Maharaja: He is a *madhyama-adhikari* who is at the stage of *madhyama-uttama-adhikari*. Like the first stage of Narada (when he was the son of a maidservant in his previous life) or Sukadeva Gosvami, or the second stage of Narada; One who is at their stage can give this *bhakti-lata-bija*.

Q: But is a *kanistha* or lower level *madhyama* able to give it?

Srila Narayana Maharaja: A *kanistha* cannot. But a *madhyama-adhikari* who knows the *siddhanta* and has served his Gurudeva, attaining some realization, is capable of giving. If the seed of *bhakti* is there in him, then he can give the seed of *bhakti*. If he does not have *bhakti* himself, how can he do this?

Q: If someone has a *guru* who cannot give the *bhakti-lata-bija*, then is that to be accepted as real initiation?

Srila Narayana Maharaja: No, he should be changed. It is not real initiation. Bhaktivinoda Thakura says that when a *bhakta*, a devotee, is thinking and contemplating his own situation and is asking himself, "What has my Gurudeva given? Nothing is going on. I am endeavoring to practice so much, and I am praying, but nothing is coming." Then he should realize that he has not received so much. The *guru* is not qualified. Then he should change his Gurudeva, and accept at least a realized *madhyama-uttama* vaisnava as his guru. Otherwise he should not change.

If his *guru* is chanting *harinama* and he has *sraddha*, and he also knows some *siddhanta*—not so much, but he is not fallen— then a devotee may approach his Gurudeva and request him, "Can you please be merciful? Can I take *siksa* from that other *guru*?" Then his *guru* will be very happy, and the guru himself will also go to him. But if he does not agree, then the disciple should understand that he does not have a qualified *guru*. A qualified *guru* will be very happy and he will tell his disciple, "You should go to that person." Like the example in *Jaiva-Dharma* where Raghunatha dasa Babaji, who is so highly qualified, sent his two disciples to Gopala-guru Goswami in Puri to take siksa from him, even though they were very advanced. Or another example is Hrdaya Caitanya who told his disciple Syamananda to go to Jiva Gosvami. Like this, there is no harm. The qualified *guru* is very happy. If a guru is not instructing like this, then the disciple should understand that his *guru* has false ego.

Q: In this situation which you are describing, is the *bhakti-lata-bija* coming from this first *guru* who is sincere but not so advanced, or is it coming from the *uttama-guru*?

Srila Narayana Maharaja: It is mixed. But the real *bhakti-lata-bija* will come from the second *guru*, the *uttama guru*. If he is qualified, and by hearing so many *tattva* from him, the real *diksa* will be there.

Sbd: Sometimes it is said,"We might not be on the highest level now, but in the future we will be."

Srila Narayana Maharaja: Maybe they will fall down! If inspiration is not coming from the *guru's* instructions and *diksa*, then the disciple should understand that the guru, being unfaithful to his own Gurudeva, is therefore not qualified. But if he is qualified to some extent, and is not fallen, then we should go to him and we should beg his consent, his order, that, "Please, you order me and give your permission to me to go to this qualified person." He will quickly give his blessings. If he does not consent, then it should be understood that he has false ego.

Gdd: Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada says the *guru* takes the disciple's sins, *papa*.

Srila Narayana Maharaja: Never. The bona fide *guru* is qualified. He is like fire. He will burn everything away. Why will he take it himself? He will not take the fruits from the disciple's *karma*. Never will he take them. He will at once, by his mercy, quickly burn all. No, there is nothing to be confused about. But, if the *guru* is not qualified, if he is not *tattva-jnani*, or if he is a *kanistha-adhikari*, then he will have to take all the sins. A *madhyama-adhikari* who is at the level of *madhyama-uttama*, oh, he will burn everything.

Q: You say in your commentary of the *Gopi-gita* that if the *guru* takes unqualified disciples, then a consequence will be that it will ruin the *guru's bhakti*. Does this refer to a lower-class *guru*?

Srila Narayana Maharaja: Yes. It means that he wants so many disciples. He is not qualified, and actually not a *guru* of that higher class. Caitanya Mahaprabhu made the whole world His disciples by instructing "Oh you should chant!" We are doing like so and to some we are giving so much inspiration.

Q: Also they use the argument that unless one is on the platform of *uttama* oneself, one cannot recognize another *uttama*. They say, "it takes one to know one". How can one recognize?

Srila Narayana Maharaja: There should be a greed for *bhakti*, and regarding those who are not helping to develop their greed, the disciple should think, "My *guru* is not qualified." I should go to a qualifed guru.

Sbd: How can the disciple get inspiration?

Srila Narayana Maharaja: He will get true inspiration and inspiration for the activities of *sravanam, kirtanam* and *visnu-smaranam* from a bonafide guru. If a so-called *guru* is not somewhat realized, he cannot give a seed of *bhakti*, because he has no developed *bhakti* himself. How can he give? So he should be changed.

Gaura Premanande!

Taking Śrīla Prabhupāda Straight

Introduction

The following letter is written by His Holiness B.V. Bhāgavata Mahārāja, a disciple of Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Puri Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who, at the age of 101 years is the most revered and senior disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda currently living on the planet. In this most sober essay, he answers various unfounded and fallacious accusations put forward by a member of the ISKCON Governing Body against the personality of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Our reason for including it in this book in the form of an appendix is that the points raised by him in defence of Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja are correctly pertaining to fundamental truths concerning the principle of *ācārya*. By a patient and unbiased reading of the logical assertions he makes herein, one will be able to see clearly that one *ācārya* may differ from another in terms of the detailed methods which he employs to present the absolute message of the *sampradāya* to the public at large and to his disciples in particular; but this does not prove, in and of itself, that he is not in the line of his predecessor *ācārya*. The bold and uncompromising tone of his presentation challenges us to understand both the genius and the sensitivity utilized by the Ācārya in his merciful delivery of the esoteric truths of Gauḍīya Vaisnavism to the masses.

He cites the example of the powerful preaching mission of His Divine Grace Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda, the *Nityananda-saktyavesha-avatara* of the 20th century who spread the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu throughout the globe. In his presentation of the practices and teachings of Gauḍīya Vaisnavism to the modern public, he chose to modify them in a form different to that of his own Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Yet, in doing so, he was not actually deviating from his Gurudeva, but rather he was demonstrating his absolute dedication to his orders. By this we must see that in the hearts of the most exalted Vaiṣṇavas there is an overflowing of mercy to help the plight of the fallen conditioned souls. It is this true compassion which inspires them to devise ways to attract and to engage the sincere aspirants willing to accept the medicine they are delivering. Their apparent difference to that of their predecessors is rather a mark and measure of their own glorious position of exalted spiritual realization.

We appreciate the logic and forthrightness of Śrīpad Bhāgavata Mahārāja's letter, and we applaud his courageous effort to defend a pure devotee of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. His letter is presented herein unedited and unaltered.

Taking Śrīla Prabhupāda Straight

A letter from His Holiness Bhakti Vidagdha Bhāgavata Mahārāja, as an answer to Śrīman Ravindra Svarupa's letter on His Holiness Śrīmad Bhakti Vedanta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja.

All Glories to Śrī Guru and Gauranga. Hare Kṛṣṇa. Please accept my respects.

As a humble servant of the servant of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and following the orders of my Guru Mahārāja, *om visnupada* 108 Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Puri Gosvāmī Mahārāja, I am writing this letter as to warn you in a friendly way not to commit *vaiṣnava-aparadha*. It is written from a completely neutral point of view, so that no one will feel attacked or offended at heart. I ask for forgiveness if such a thing is felt.

I came across your letter on the CHAKRA Website the other day and thought of it as my duty to protest against the spreading of such wrong conceptions of the Gauḍīya Maṭha and its exalted Vaiṣṇavas, in the line of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. I will just try to show you some of the misconceptions that you are spreading in the name of *guru-seva* (or service to your Śrīla Prabhupāda).

1. If you do not like to invite His Holiness Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja to any of your ISKCON centres, that's fine, but I think that if a Vaiṣṇava shows up at my door and I do not feel any happiness upon seeing him, that also is to be considered a *vaiṣṇava-aparadha*. H. H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja is a well-known Vaiṣṇava (that you cannot deny) so if you or any of the members in your organization (which is also supposed to be a Vaiṣṇava organization) are not happy to see such a Vaiṣṇava at your doorstep, then you are generating such *aparadhas*.

2. You are speaking about the indications of Śrīla Narahari Sarakara Ṭhākura in *Śrī* Kṛṣṇa *Bhajanamrta* that if one's spiritual master is in good standing, and yet is not sufficiently elevated to give a disciple instructions for his further advancement, then the disciple may take permission from his *dīkṣā-guru* and thus take advantage of the more advanced Vaiṣṇavas for instructions. Then you have asked, "What if the *dīkṣā-guru* does not give his approval?". Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has answered this very clearly in his book *Jaiva Dharma* as follows: "When the disciple chooses someone as a *guru*, he has no opportunity to verify if that person is *tattvajna* (he who knows the treatises of Vaisnavism) and of the Vaiṣṇavas (in the real sense) then at the time of the effect, he cannot get any result from that kind of initiation and must give him up at once".

So there is no question of asking permission from such a so-called *guru* (*guru-bruva*). You are well aware of the fact that many of your ISKCON members are not well trained to accept a *guru* and in many cases choose them out of ignorance. When after some time they come to understand that their *guru* is not qualified enough, they give him up and search for a more advanced Vaiṣṇava to instruct them. It does not matter if the so-called *guru* is in good standing according to your ISKCON or GBC rules. It has been seen that by following the instructions of your GBC many innocent devotees have been cheated by accepting someone as their *guru* who was never qualified to accept disciples. The most recent example is that of your Harikesa (Mahārāja or Prabhu) which proves my point very clearly. You should not turn the devotees into slaves of the GBC. Rather according to the scriptures you must allow them to freely search for a spiritual master. It is not a question of whether a disciple goes to Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja for instructions or not. You have to understand the reason why these people go to him. Obviously they have the idea that their present *guru* is not qualified enough to instruct them. The moment a disciple thinks like this, his relationship with his *guru* is automatically broken. According to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, he should not disrespect his previous guide, but should with due respect search for a real initiation. This previous initiation is to be considered as *abhasa* (a faint presence) and it is strictly necessary to accept initiation (in the real sense) in order to begin doing real *bhajana-kriya*.

You have put forward so many arguments to prove that H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja is not an advanced devotee. A word to the wise, please do not spread these ideas because you have to care for your own spiritual welfare and at the same time be careful not to criticize the advanced devotees. You have also stated that H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja's approach is significantly different from that of your Śrīla Prabhupāda and that he is not a *śikṣā*-disciple of your founder-*ācārya*. Does that mean that one who differs in details from the line of his *guru* is not an advanced Vaiṣṇava? If this is so, I would like to ask you a few questions, and please do not consider this as an attack since it has been you who has brought out all these old issues. We do not disrespect Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja, but you yourself are doing it to him. We just want to warn you so that you will not commit any offences against your own *guru* by misunderstanding his teachings.

I do not think that H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja is claiming to be your authorized spiritual master. It was your own GBC who chose him to be an authorized spiritual master. Previously they had done the same with Śrīla Bhakti Raksaka Śrīdhara Mahārāja, and it seems ridiculous that you do not understand that the *śikṣā* and *dīkṣā-gurus* must always be kept on the same level, so just as you cannot reject Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja you (and the GBC) cannot reject Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja or H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, due to the fact that you yourself have given them this position.

Your Prabhupāda taught you all that one should not blindly accept someone as a spiritual master. My question is that when he taught you all these things had you blindly accepted him as a spiritual master? It is quite clear that at the beginning of the ISKCON movement none of your Godbrothers were well-aware of the necessary qualifications of a bona fide spiritual master. Just out of pure inspiration they had taken initiation from Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja and were definitely not cheated by following the instructions of the *caitya-guru*. Even after having diligently studied the scriptures it does not qualify one to select a bona fide *guru*. The inspiration that comes from the heart is what helps you. If this inspiration comes from the GBC, then it may not be permanent. The only judgment a disciplic can make about his *guru* is whether he is a *māyāvādī* or attached to sense enjoyment. If the disciple wants to get to know his *guru* in every sense, then he has to be on an equal level with that *guru*, then what need would there be for an initiation? Please stop to think it over for one minute. How was it that you chose your Prabhupāda as a bona fide *guru* when all of you were completely (and it still seems that most of you are) ignorant about *guru-tattva*?

I have the answers from the scriptures. This can only happen by inspiration. Being merciful to the *jīva*, Śrīman Mahāprabhu inspires the heart of the disciple in the form of *caitya-guru* so as to accept initiation or instructions from a certain Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*. Your GBC members are trying to prove that Mahāprabhu has cheated them, because at first they were inspired to take *śikṣā* from Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja and later rejected him as unauthorized. Then they accepted instructions from H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and once again stopped coming to him also. Does this mean that they were wrongly inspired by Mahāprabhu again and again so as to take instructions from unbona fide *śikṣā-gurus*? Tomorrow they may discover that they were cheated by Mahāprabhu when they accepted Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja as their *dīkṣā* and *śikṣā-guru*. Is this the reason why Harikesa left your movement as well as the instructions of your Prabhupāda and so have many others?

śikṣā guruke ta jani krsnera svarupa
antaryami bhakta-srestha ei dui rupa

"I know the *śikṣā-guru* to be directly Lord Kṛṣṇa. He functions in two ways, as *antaryami* and as the greatest devotee."

Some of your ISKCON GBC members accepted H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja as their *śikṣā-guru* who must be on an equal level as the *dīkṣā-guru*, and now you are questioning whether he is a *rasika-bhakta* and an advanced devotee or not? Maybe after some time you will have the same doubts about your own *dīkṣā-guru* also. We would not however put forth such a question since we know

your *guru* better than you do.

Rasika means a devotee who has established his relationship with the Supreme Lord. Our entire *guru-paramparā* is composed of eternally liberated (*ragatmika*) residents of the transcendental Vraja-*dhāma*. All of them are *rasika* devotees. An unfortunate disciple who cannot accept his *guru* as a *rasika* devotee has no chance of making progress on the spiritual path. We accept your Gurudeva as well as H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja as *rasika* devotees and as advanced Vaiṣṇavas. But will you accept that?

You have argued that H. H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja has aggressively targeted ISKCON members and congregations. I would like to know if it is that he goes to the temples and drags the people out or they go to him to listen to his *hari-katha*. It seems to me that you are saying that the Gauḍīya Maṭha has no right to attack the *apasampradāyas* and *māyāvādīs*. Then what are we going to preach? It is not Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja who reveals the evils of your GBC, and other ISKCON leaders. Your GBC has rejected seven of your original eleven *gurus*. Does Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja have anything to do with this? You must feel ashamed that these people (the seven GBC members that have left) have proven by their activities that they were not even on the level of *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs*. If H. H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja ever spoke of them as *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs*, then he must have spoken about the best in your present ISKCON organization.

To say that the present ISKCON structure is a *karma-yoga* organization, is to give them the highest respect. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written, that apart from the *niskama-karmi*, a *sakama-karmi* cannot be referred to as a *yogi*. Therefore according to him only a *niskama-karmi* is performing *karma-yoga*. It is a shame that during the *tulasi* worship, and *parikrama* you *chant "yani kani-ca papani,"* when it is clearly known that it is a prayer for a *sakama-karmi* who wants to subdue all of his sins by doing devotional service. Your *sannyāsīs* and *gurus* (AT LEAST MOST OF THEM) keep the Nrsimha-*kavaca* and little pendants of Lord Nrsimhadeva on their necks for protection which is clearly *sakama-karma*. Persons who have such tendencies cannot be counted amongst the *karma-yogis*. We think that a few amongst the best are practising *karma-yoga*. We have due respect for them and maybe H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja is aware of that therefore giving such high appreciation of ISKCON, as a *karma-yoga* organization just to respect those few who are performing *niskama-karma*.

You have also complained that H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja reinitiated disciples of ISKCON *gurus*. But do you think of it as a reinitiation or a real initiation? Those Harikesa disciples who had lost faith two or three years ago, and later took real initiation from Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, was it not an intelligent move on their part? Were they ever initiated by Harikesa in the real sense of the word? So where is the question of reinitiation? Actually H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja only initiates those who are sincere spiritual seekers who have been cheated as well as those who were about to be cheated by your present GBCs. So why are you so disturbed? He has never reinitiated anyone, because this term reinitiation is in itself ridiculous. IT MEANS NOTHING!

It is a true fact that Tamal Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī and Girirāja Mahārāja used to respect H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja as their *śikṣā-guru*. They even performed *guru-puja* to him many times and *aratis* at the Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha. How is it that they can abandon a person whom they have accepted as their *śikṣā-guru* without any apparent reason? Both of them are initiating *gurus* in ISKCON at the moment, but if they argue that they could not recognize him before that means that they do not have any realizations as to how to understand what are the principle symptoms of an advanced Vaiṣṇava. So why are they initiating so many people and your GBC supports them as bona fide *gurus*, if they do not have the power to distinguish the position of a Vaiṣṇava which is a minimum qualification for a *madhyama-adhikārī*?

You are disturbed because H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja spends an exceptionally long time in the most successful preaching area of Tamal Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī. Please try to understand the situation. If today Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja came in his previous form to preach in the world and

the disciples of Tamal Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja asked him to stay for a long time at their place and he agreed to stay for that time preaching, would you be asking the same questions also? For the disciples of Tamal Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja seems to be the *guru* of their *guru*, and it would be natural for them to arrange a long-time program for him. Why does that disturb you so much? If Tamal Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī wants to preach and spend an exceptionally long time in the most successful centres of any Gauḍīya Maṭha he is welcome. It is a fact that I witnessed many of the ISKCON *gurus* and *sannyāsīs* visiting the Gauḍīya Maṭha headquarters in Mayapura and were always welcomed as well as respected like any other Gauḍīya Maṭha *ācārya*. It is very immature that you are not ready to respond in the same manner.

In 1990 you were persuaded by some people who were accepting *śikṣā* from H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja to visit him. Where are those *śikṣā* disciples now? How are they giving *śikṣā* to others? What will they say when asked by others where did they get their *śikṣā* from? This is ridiculous. Some how you were disturbed because in the first verse of *Isopanisad* the word *idam* was explained differently from the book published by ISKCON. I strongly request you to see the commentaries by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Baladeva Vidyabhusana on this verse if it is not offensive for you to read other books than those of your Prabhupāda. You were very shocked because you are a disciple of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja (as you have written) and in front of you H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja have said that there was an error in his book. If you do not say that it is the error of the book do you want to prove your Gurudeva as a fool? You may do so but we do not, because we know your *guru* better than you do. In the commentary of *Caitanya-caritamrita* it is written that *gunja-mala* means a garland of small conchshells. Do you accept that? Do you put garlands of conchshells on Kṛṣṇa instead of *gunja-malas*? If you say that there are no errors in the books written by your Gurudeva are you trying to say that he did not know what *gunja-mala* means? You may say yes, but we the members of Gauḍīya Maṭha are very much afraid to commit offences at his lotus feet knowing perfectly well what is a *gunja-mala*, but it is a mistake of the book. In many other places there are also many mistakes , but these mistakes are only in the books. Why are you blaming H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja for wanting to protect the respect of your Prabhupāda?

You have written that your Prabhupāda emphasized the importance of his books. That may be true, but you must remember most of these books came out only after ISKCON was established. H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja as well as many other Gauḍīya Maṭha devotees were getting close association with your Gurudeva long before ISKCON was established. If you say that your Gurudeva became qualified after having written these books then it is certainly an *aparadha*. The *Bhāgavata*, *tulasi*, the holy river Ganga and the devotees of the Lord are worshipable from their birth. It is offensive to think that Gurudeva is a general *sadhaka* and that he attained perfection after having written all of these books and established ISKCON, and from then on is worthy of worship. That is considered to be the third *nāma-aparadha* to think of Śrī Gurudeva as a mortal man. For those who had association with your Gurudeva long before many of your GBC members and *ācāryas* were born, they certainly know your *guru* better than you do.

One clear example of your ignorance was the case of the funeral services for your Gurudeva. Your Gurudeva wished that H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja put him to rest in his *samadhi*. To you it may have seemed that your Prabhupāda was only speaking about funeral services. This is due only to your ignorance and lack of experience in the Vedic culture. It is the custom of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas as well as other Vaiṣṇavas and *smarta sampradāyas* that only the successor of the departed *ācārya* has the right to perform his funeral rites. When the body is offered to the fire the eldest son of a departed *gṛhastha* had the priority to touch the fire on to the body of the departed parent. When it is offered to the soil mixed with salt (as it happens mostly in the case of the Gauḍīyas and other *sampradāyas'* departed *sannyāsīs*) the successor of that *sannyāsī* has the right to write the *samadhi-mantra* on the body of the departed *sannyāsī*. If the successor is not a *sannyāsī* (as was in the case of Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura) then the seniormost Godbrother present there can write it as well as any other exalted Vaiṣṇava. In the case of Prabhupāda Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the *samadhi-mantra* was written by his first *sannyāsa* disciple Śrīla Bhakti Pradipa

Tirtha Mahārāja, though he himself was an initiated disciple of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. If a *sannyāsī* has departed without leaving a successor or without making any disciples, then the assembled Vaiṣṇavas must choose a qualified Vaiṣṇava to do the ceremony. Even the Hindu laws of India consider it at the time of dispute for succession the person who did perform the rituals at the time of the funerals, giving him main preference.

So you have to consider that although so many Vaiṣṇavas were present in Vṛndāvana at that time including most of your *sannyāsī* Godbrothers, your Gurudeva chose Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja to place him in his *samadhi*. In the ISKCON video it is clearly seen that Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja is writing the *samadhi-mantra* on the body of your Gurudeva. You cannot make a mockery out of this.

I am sure that you are being led down a primrose path of deviation by this performance of *vaiṣṇava-aparadha* and in this way putting your Gurudeva in a lower position. You are always concocting different ways to control the present situation in your society and are never consulting with the more advanced and experienced Vaiṣṇavas who can give good advice.

You wrote that your Prabhupāda's instructions to you are open and direct, but by what you have written it seems to be the complete opposite. I will give you an example to clarify this point. Your Prabhupāda had said that the "Gauḍīya Maṭha had failed," but in your writings you say that "Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda radically reformed the Gauḍīya tradition transforming it into a global preaching mission in the modern world." Now what is the name of that mission? It is the Gauḍīya Maṭha. And who were its members that dedicated themselves to that mission? You must learn to appreciate their position, but unfortunately you are busy publishing books that make false propaganda against these exalted devotees. If it is not against your GBC rule I strongly request you to read the book entitled *Saraswati Ṭhākura* published by Maṇḍala Media and in that way get lots of real information about the global successful preaching mission, because according to your writings the Gauḍīya Math is unsuccessful.

Again you have quoted a room conversation in Bombay [August 16, 1976] wherein your Prabhupāda wanted to nourish the very soft faith of the newly initiated (those who were less than ten years or so) and you think this is exactly the fact.

Before the passing away of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, he gave orders that there would only be one *guru* and the rest should work in a very harmonizing way as to be able to preach the message of Rūpa-Raghunātha. He also said that Ananta Vasudeva will preach the message of Rūpa-Raghunātha and Kunja-bihari Vidyabhusana (later on Śrīla Bhakti Vilasa Tirtha Mahārāja) will do the managing for as long as he lived and must be respected by all. A few years earlier he had written, *vasudevananta dasye thakiya ta sada laha nāma*—always remain in the service of Ananta Vasudeva and chant the holy name.

In his presence it was said that Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wanted all of the members of the Gauḍīya Maṭha to stay under the guidance of Ananta Vasudeva Prabhu and chant the holy name. On that basis he had been selected as the *ācārya* of the Gauḍīya Maṭha and no one had been fighting for that post. Your Gurudeva was also part of the Gauḍīya Maṭha and he also did not object at that time. They did not create an artificial *ācārya*. Śrīla Ananta Vasudeva Prabhu was a *Brahmācari* (in white dress, according to Gauḍīya Maṭha tradition only when a *Brahmācari* accepted the vow to maintain a life-long celibacy, the *ācārya* will offer him the saffron cloth) at that time, and afterwards when his Godbrothers saw some flaws in his behaviour they left his association. Śrīla Audulomi Mahārāja was then selected as the following *ācārya* of the Gauḍīya Missions and Śrīla Ananta Vasudeva Prabhu accepted the life of a Vaiṣṇava *gṛhastha* and stopped giving initiations. After the disappearance of Śrīla Audolomi Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhāgavata Mahārāja was appointed as the next *ācārya* and when he disappeared Śrīpad Parivrajaka Mahārāja was the next. There is nothing wrong with this.

If you say that this is not enough proof that Prabhupāda wanted Śrīla Ananta Vasudeva Prabhu to

be the *ācārya*, one may ask, "Did Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura want to appoint Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja as his successor *ācārya*?" If not, did he try to become more than his *guru*? All of these are your questions, can you answer them? You may say that Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja inspired so many people to come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and that proves that he was the successor of his *guru*. In that argument one may say that H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja is also inspiring so many of your Godbrothers and Godsisters to follow him, which proves that he is a self-revealed successor of your Prabhupāda. Then why are you so disturbed?

You have said that you will ask your Gurudeva why he did not promote Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja as the next *ācārya*, but will you ask him why he engaged such persons as Kirtanānanda, Bhavānanda, Bhagavān and four other persons as GBCs? Do you think that your Godbrothers and Godsisters are blindly following H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, or would you rather they follow people like Kirtanānanda and the other six GBCs because they were appointed by your Gurudeva as leaders of ISKCON?

Lastly, you have directly hit a very sensitive point which ultimately concerns your Gurudeva. In it you say that H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja has deviated from the line of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Do you believe that what he preaches is outside of the line of Śrīla Prabhupāda? I request you to read the lectures and articles of Śrīla Prabhupāda in the weekly Gauḍīya Magazine. The preaching and delivering system of your Prabhupāda comes from different places rather than just the mission of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. We do not want to criticize him because we know him better than you, but it will be difficult for you to accept this as the truth.

1. The *maha-mantra* in ISKCON is always sung as a full *mantra*. You can never chant it half and then the other half. It is clearly coming from the idea of the *babajis* and other groups that entered the Gauḍīya Mission (i. e. Puri Gosvāmī or Śrīla Ananta Vasudeva Prabhu and Śrīla Audolomi Mahārāja's line) and your Gurudeva taught you to follow in their footsteps. If you say that they deviated does that mean that your Gurudeva took ideas from deviated persons?

2. Keeping peacock feathers on Mahāprabhu can only be seen in the temple established by Śrīla Ananta Vasudeva Prabhu (Puri dāsa Mahasaya) at Rādhā-Kunda and in prominent *gauranga-nagari-sampradāyas* or one of the thirteen pseudo-sects. We can clearly see this in the temples established by Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja. Where has this come from?

3. Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura clearly said that Advaita Ācārya Prabhu never had a beard and used to keep clean shaven. But the *bauls* (one of the thirteen *apasampradāyas*) wanted to make him a *baul* and put a beard on his face. On the deities at the Yogapitha or Śrīvasa Angan as well as any other Gauḍīya Maṭha temple you will never find a beard on Advaita Ācārya 's face. But at the Mayapura ISKCON temple as well as other temples (in San Diego and Hawaii) we can see Advaita Ācārya with a beard. Will you say that your Gurudeva was following the *bauls*?

4. One prominent disciple of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura gave the *Brahmā-gayatri* to a lady disciple. Śrīla Prabhupāda later wrote an article in the weekly Gauḍīya entitled *bhai-sahajiya* (brother *sahajiya*). Most recently the Santikunja at Haridvara was preaching that anyone can get the *Brahmā-gayatri* initiation. Can I simply ask you from which line your Gurudeva get the idea of initiating lady disciples into the*Brahmā-gayatri*?

5. The chanting of the Panca-tattva *mantra* at the beginning of each round does not come from Śrīla Prabhupāda, he taught his disciples to chant it in a different way. From where did your Prabhupāda get this?

6. Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura accepted that the border of Mayapura is a small canal called gurgure (just before one approaches the Yogapitha temple from the

ISKCON temple side you will find a canal crossing the road and that is the border of Śrī Mayapura according to Śrīla Prabhupāda on his commentary in the *Caitanya Bhāgavata*). Long after his disappearance he revealed in the heart of Śrīla B.D. Madhava Mahārāja that near the confluence of the Ganga and Sarasvatī rivers Ishodhyana is situated which is part of Antardvipa, Śrīdhāma Mayapura. The present Ishodhyana was revealed by Śrīla B.D. Madhava Mahārāja which was also supported by Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja and your Gurudeva established his world headquarters of ISKCON in that part of Mayapura, which was not accepted by his Gurudeva but was revealed by his Godbrother. Why could not he take Śrīla Prabhupāda straight?

7. Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura taught us how to worship the deity in the temple. In Gauḍīya Maṭha temples his orders are mostly followed. They offer *bhoga* five times a day and *aratiks* three times a day on regular days . But in your ISKCON temples we find a different system which is more likely to the system of the caste *gosvāmīs* and other temples in Vṛndāvana who follow the worship according to the eight-*yama* pastimes of the Lord. We like that system and also appreciate it, but our question is—from where did your Gurudeva learn this kind of worship? Did he take *śikṣā* from the caste *gosvāmīs*?

8. *Kirtana* with the harmonium was prohibited by Śrīla Prabhupāda. Only in the temple of Śrīla B.H. Bon Mahārāja this was seen before. We are not criticizing him because we know that he is an exalted Vaiṣṇava. He was a qualified *ācārya* and has the right to introduce any musical instrument into his temple. Your Prabhupāda also introduced it in his ISKCON temples. Did he learn that from Śrīla Bhakti Hṛdaya Bon Mahārāja?

9. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura instructed us to worship Śrī Śrī Guru Gauranga-Gandharvika-Giridhari. In all the temples established by him we find Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. The *mangala-arati* and other *arati* songs specifically written by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Prabhupāda follow in their footsteps. Whereas in your ISKCON temples there are different combinations of deities and different kinds of songs are recommended for *mangala-arati* which are not considered as *mangala-arati songs*. Do you think this is a deviation or not?

10. Śrīla Prabhupāda ordered his disciples to print and distribute books of the previous *ācāryas* and specially those of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. He did not write many books himself because he thought it unnecessary, whereas you clearly state that your Gurudeva instructed you to print, publish and read his books only. Does that mean that he thought that the books of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura are less valuable than his?

11. Śrīla Prabhupāda or his disciples never recommended a new devotee to chant *harināma* on a *mala* without being properly initiated by a *guru*. According to the commentary by Śrīla Visvanatha Cakravarti Ṭhākura, on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Sixth Canto (the case of Ajamila) it will only generate a great offense (gurvava jna). Your Prabhupāda began this in ISKCON. Where did this idea come from?

12. You have complained that H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja has accepted services from young ladies (*kumaris*). For your information I want to say that in his mission Śrīla Prabhupāda strictly prohibited the ladies from serving even in the kitchen where *sannyāsīs, Brahmācaris* and *vanaprasthas* were living. He never allowed any women (with the exception of two elderly women disciples of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura that sometimes used to cook only for Śrīla Prabhupāda) to serve the *maṭha* residents in any way possible. Later on a few Gauḍīya Maṭha *ācāryas* allowed some women into the kitchen, and your Prabhupāda is no exception. Many times young Western ladies used to serve him including to cut his hair, but we do not dare criticize him for this behaviour because we know that he was elderly and the girls were old enough to be his grand-daughters and besides he was in such an elevated consciousness that there was no chance of him being affected by sensual desires. H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja is also

at that age and if he is following the footsteps of your Prabhupāda why does that bother you? This European lady whom you say is your reliable source of information found this tableau filled with eroticism because there is one logic—*kamuka pasyanti kamini mayam jagat*—a lustful person sees the whole world as full of lust. By falsely accusing H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, you are accusing your own Gurudeva.

These are a few of the examples on how your Prabhupāda differs from the teachings and practices of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. His Mayapura-*dhāma*, his process of deity worship, his *nāma-sankīrtana*, his book publications, his personal conducts, his deity installations, his process of initiating disciples—all differs from his Gurudeva. We cannot know the cause how it happened, but do you want to say that he is not a bona fide *śikṣā* or *dīkṣā* disciple of his Gurudeva or not in a direct line from him? Then how can you deny H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja's claim as the successor of your Prabhupāda, only because his teachings differ from him?

You say that Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja has no attraction for the *Gītā*, but have you seen the beautiful edition of *Bhagavad-Gītā* with Hindi translations and commentaries by Śrīla Visvanatha Cakravarti Ṭhākura, as well as other profound commentaries by H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja himself? If he has no taste for the *Gītā* then why has he bothered to give such nice presentation and commentaries?

At the cornerstone laying of the Baghbazaar Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura expressed his desire to publish the authentic commentaries of the higher topics of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* such as *Gopi-Gītā* and *Bhramara-Gītā*. He said, "Still now we are saying this is not so. Now we must speak this is like that, we should not read the commentaries of *Gopi-Gītā* and *Bhramara-Gītā* written by the *prakṛta-sahajiyas* but we must also publish authentic editions of the *Gopi-Gītā* and the *Bhramara-Gītā* of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* because we need to perform real *kṛṣṇanusilanam*." This was printed in the weekly *Gauḍīya*. H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja is now trying to fulfill that desire of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, so how can you say that Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja has become an instrument of this attack against the mission of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura? Our Gurudeva *om visnupada* 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Pramoda Puri Gosvāmī Mahārāja considers him to be the best weapon to resist the misconceptions of the so-called *babajis* of Rādhā-Kunda and it is a proven fact that when he goes to Rādhā-Kunda he openly challenges them to come forward and have a debate with him if they do not accept the mission of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī as bona fide. Nobody dares to come near him. Do you think that any of your ISKCON *gurus* can do this?

You also say that Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja has dismissed book distribution as an inferior activity. But whatever you have quoted from your Prabhupāda also supports it. First of all you have quoted that your Prabhupāda has said, "Book distribution is in the mood of the Gopis." Again you have quoted about your ultimate goal as, "We shall transcend and get through the invincible impass of Maya and reach the effulgent kingdom of God to render Him face-to-face eternal service, in full bliss and knowledge." You do not want to distribute books at the stage of ultimate attainment, but desire another kind of face-to-face service to God. Doesn't that mean that your means and goals are not the same? But our *guru-varga* and your Gurudeva also have taught that the means and the goal are the same. You yourself have agreed that book distribution is not the ultimate goal or eternal *bhakti* . Then this can be called *bhaktyabhasa* or *bhaktya-ropa* but never real *bhakti*, because it is a temporary *seva* and not like *sravanam* and *kīrtanam* which are eternal. If you are going to do this you may as well accuse Śrīla Gaurakisora Dasa Babaji Mahārāja as well as Śrīla Jagannātha Dasa Babaji Mahārāja because they never went out on the streets to sell books due to the fact that they were in the mood of the *gopīs*. Such offences will bring utter ruin in your spiritual life as has happened to many of your Godbrothers already.

An *ācārya* can instruct his disciples according to a particular time, place and circumstance whereas in other circumstances he can be given different instructions. He has the right to accept necessary

directions from the scriptures and preach them by his personal conduct. The definition of an *ācārya* is as follows:

acinoti yah śāstrartham acare sthapayatyapi
svayamacarate tasmat ācāryah tena kirtitah

"A person who chooses the conclusions of the authorized scriptures according to a particular time, place and circumstances and practices what he preaches to others is called an *ācārya*."

Sometimes for the disciple the words of his *guru* differs from those of the other saints and the authentic scriptures. In such cases he must not offensively think that *guru* or *śāstra* or saints are wrong. Rather he must remember the famous song by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura Mahasaya,

sādhu śāstra-guru-vakya hrdaye kariya aikya
satata bhavisa prema majhe
karmi jnani bhaktihina ihare karibe bhina
narottama ei tattva gaje

"Narottama sings the *tattva* that one must harmonize the directions of the *sādhus, śāstras* and *guru* in his heart and always float in the ocean of *prema*. The *karmis* and *jnanis* are devoid of *bhakti*, so you must keep yourself apart from them."

Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura Mahasaya advises us to harmonize the words of *sādhu, śāstra* and *guru*. If the words of the *sādhu* seems to be different than those of *śāstra* and *guru* then one should not offensively think that the *sādhu* is wrong , but he must consider himself unable to understand the words of that *sādhu* and must follow *guru-vakya*. If the *guru* differs from *sādhu* and *śāstra* then instead that the *guru* is wrong one must consider himself unable to understand the real purpose of *guru-vakya* and on such cases he must follow *sādhu-vakya*. The *śāstras* are never wrong. Either the *guru* or *sādhu* guide us to follow the necessary directions of the *śāstras*, otherwise—

ye śāstra vidhim utsrijya vartate kamacarata
na sa siddhim avapnoti na sukham na para gatim

It seems that you are confused with the instructions of your *guru* and are unable to harmonize them in your heart. I humbly suggest you to choose some realized *sādhu* to clear up your doubts rather than offend H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja. If you do not like to go to him that's fine but you have no right to stop those who want to go and receive instructions or initiations from him. You have requested your Godbrothers and Godsisters to follow Satsvarupa Mahārāja's footsteps, but how can they believe you? Previously your GBC had requested them to follow their footsteps and many did. Right now seven out of eleven guides do not even exist or are in proper standard according to your GBC rules. Who knows maybe after a few years you will pass the same judgment on Satsvarupa Mahārāja, by then H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja may not be physically present and thus the devotees will be forever deprived of his direct association. Which fool will want to depend on your words? Do you rely on your own self?

From your Gurudeva you have quoted as follows, "A pure devotee can distinguish between the *bhakti-lata* creeper and a mundane creeper, and is very alert to distinguish them and keeping them apart."

You also say that you have distinguished some of these weeds quite evident in the person of H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja. It is simply a strange audacity that you call yourself as a pure devotee and thus deny other exalted devotees who recommend Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja as a *sad-guru* and a *rasika*

devotee. Our Guru Mahārāja has said openly that Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja is a *sad-guru* and a *rasika-bhakta*. Although I am neither a *śikṣā* or *dīkṣā* disciple of H.H. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, still I never dare to stop someone from taking instructions or initiations from him. Quite to the contrary if they want to go to him I am the first to encourage them to do so.

It is completely ludicrous and outrageous that most of you ISKCON GBCs came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness less than thirty years ago and many of them are out of their devotional practices already and claiming yourselves as bona fide preceptors and detectors of unwanted weeds (*upasakhas*) in the person of a devotee who has been practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness for over fifty years without faltering once, even years before many of your GBCs had taken birth. Our most respected Guru Mahārāja has been practising Kṛṣṇa consciousness continuously almost from his birth and with 100 years of experience in such matters is not qualified to guide others or recommend a person as an elevated Vaiṣṇava? On the other hand your GBC who had never heard *kṛṣṇa-nāma* before 1966 and whose future is uncertain is qualified to do so?

In fact you are scared of the Gauḍīya Maṭha preachers, especially those who are born in Bharatabhumi (India). The Gauḍīya Maṭha has never had to complain that ISKCON *gurus* are taking away their disciples. If it is only your ISKCON GBCs who are disturbed, then it seems to me that you want to monopolize everything simply by using the name of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja. In India some people (backward class) have a reservation for education and government services because they have no chance in an open competition with the more intelligent class of people so the government of India reserves some seats for them so that they may have an opportunity.

My humble request to you is that you please give up such useless effort to engage in the copyrights to initiate innocent devotees. Rather let us try to follow the last instruction of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. "All of you preach in a harmonious way the teachings of Rūpa and Raghunātha with great enthusiasm."

I write this letter from a neutral point of view, because Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has instructed us not to be disheartened even if not a single person is ready to hear the open truth. As a humble servant of his servant, I thought it my duty as given to me by my Guru Mahārāja to protest against such wrong conceptions. If anyone has been hurt within his heart or felt any type of anxiety by reading this, I pray for your forgiveness and hope that one day he will come to realize all of these points.

Śrī Guru-Vaiṣṇava *dasanudasa*,

Bhakti Vidagdha Bhāgavata

P.S. Anyone who is interested in discussing or inquiring more on this subject is invited to contact through our e-mail which is as follows: horibol@sol.racsa.co.cr

From these facts it becomes thoroughly obvious that *bhāgavata-paramparā*, which includes *pañcarātrika-paramparā*, always shines forth brilliantly. Therefore, whoever ignores these facts and casts aspersions upon the *guru-pranali* of Śrī Baladeva Vidyabhusana, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, or whoever doubts that they are *rūpānuga*, is certainly a staunch opponent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and a secret agent of Kali.